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PRINT CULTURE AND THE MEDIEVAL AUTHOR

CHAUCER, LYDGATE, AND THEIR BOOKS
1473–1557



Alexandra Gillespie

OXFORD ENGLISH MONOGRAPHS

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ALEXANDRA GILLESPIE

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Christine Franzen, Robert Easting, and Eric Stanley first interested me in medieval studies during my undergraduate degree in New Zealand

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A.G.

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List of Abbreviations

BL	London, British Library
Bodl.	Oxford, University of Oxford, Bodleian Library
Camb.	Cambridge, England (for Cambridge colleges)
CUL	Cambridge, England, Cambridge University Library
EETS, ES	Early English Text Society, Extra Series
EETS, OS	Early English Text Society, Original Series
Houghton	Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University, Houghton Library
Huntington	San Marino, Calif., Huntington Library
IMEV	Brown, Carleton, and Robbins, Rossell Hope (eds.), <i>The Index of Middle English Verse</i> (Columbia University Press, 1943); Cutler, John L., and Robbins, Rossell Hope (eds.), <i>Supplement to the Index of Middle English Verse</i> (University of Kentucky Press, 1965).
ISTC	Davies, Martin (gen. ed.), <i>The Illustrated Incunable Short Title Catalogue on CD-Rom</i> , 2nd edn. (British Library, 1998).
JRL	Manchester, John Rylands University Library of Manchester
MED	<i>The Electronic Middle English Dictionary</i> (based on Robert E. Lewis (gen. ed.), <i>Middle English Dictionary</i> [University of Michigan Press, 1953–2001], <i>The Middle English Compendium</i> , (University of Michigan Digital Library Production Service, 2001), < http://ets.umdl.umich.edu.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/m/med/ >.
ODNB	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i> (Oxford University Press, 2004), < http://www.oxforddnb.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/subscribed/ >.
OED	<i>Oxford English Dictionary Online</i> (based on <i>Oxford English Dictionary</i> , 2nd edn. [Oxford University Press, 1994]), (Oxford University Press, 2005), < http://dictionary.oed.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/entrance.dtl >.
PCC	Prerogative Court of Canterbury
STC	Pollard, A. W., and Redgrave, G. R., <i>A Short Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland and Ireland 1475–1640</i> , 2nd edn., rev. and enlarged by W. A. Jackson, F. S. Ferguson, and Katharine F. Pantzer, 3 vols. (Bibliographical Society, 1986–91).

Introduction

The Author and the Book

How can one reduce the great peril, the great danger with which fiction threatens our world? The answer is: One can reduce it with the author... The author is the principle of thrift in the proliferation of meaning... The author does not precede the works, he is a certain functional principle by which, in our culture, one limits, excludes, and chooses; in short, by which one impedes the free circulation, the free manipulation, the free composition, decomposition, and recomposition of fiction.¹

For hym was levere have at his beddes heed
Twenty bookes, clad in blak or reed,
Of Aristotle and his philosophie
Than robes riche, or fithele, or gay sautrie.

(*The Canterbury Tales*, I. 293–6)

Chaucer's Clerk of Oxford has an intimate relationship with books. A well-stocked shelf is his idea of material comfort—a better way to shut out a cold night or the sounds of the world than rich garments and elegant instruments. In a way, the book is a kind of model for the man. It is not to be judged by its cover: however splendidly it is 'clad', its binding tells us no more about 'philosophie' than a bedchamber or robe tells us about a philosopher. Chaucer's point here is commonplace and subtly satirical, in that he suggests one should eschew the sensory pleasure afforded by surface impression in favour of substance. The satire works bibliographically: the surfaces are those of books. In a world in which twenty volumes was a 'riche' collection, the materials in which books were clad were liable to be rather empty and uninformative. It would take the Clerk some time to save enough money to buy and bind

¹ Foucault, 'What is an Author?', 158–9.

twenty tomes, but when he did he would probably not need a spine label, catalogue, index, or title page to remember some essential points about each (author and/or content, provenance, cost, and value to the reader for instance).² As we moderns sift through masses of textual information, we take a variety of paratextual codes and bibliographical devices for granted. Many of these were inventions of the Middle Ages. The keepers of the great patristic and medieval libraries, monastic scribes concerned about the authenticity of texts, authors who wanted to be sure that patrons remembered their names—all found it useful at times to reduce the story of a text to a name in a catalogue, a biography for the writer, or a laudatory preface.³ Medieval book producers developed ‘principles’ by which they and their readers might limit, exclude, and choose the meaning of texts.⁴ But the books that Chaucer’s Clerk prefers are different. They are just for him. He has no plans to make them, to quote Ralph Hanna III, ‘publicly available renditions of texts as are ... printed books’. In fact, it seems he has no plans to let them out of his bedroom. His books, like many medieval manuscripts,

represent defiantly individual impulses—appropriations of works for the use of particular persons in particular situations. [They] may have required no explanation, the private quirks behind their manufacture being abundantly clear; certainly, the medieval disinterest not simply in expressing but even in developing any critical terminology like our own estranges us and renders the objects of our study opaque.⁵

A kind of paradox emerges from this. Writers of the Middle Ages name the *auctor* and worry about *auctoritas* in ways that conform to the theory of authorship represented by the quotation from Michel Foucault, above. In the medieval period, the importance of ‘Aristotle’ and his learned fellows was a matter of written record. The author was a ready-made way

² On books in the Clerk’s Oxford that ‘seldom give the name of the scribe or say where or when they were written’ see Pollard, ‘The University and the Book Trade in Mediaeval Oxford’, 336.

³ See Rouse and Rouse, *Authentic Witnesses*, 469–94, on medieval bibliographical aids of all kinds; Wormald, ‘The Monastic Library’, 26, on finding lists; Minnis, *The Medieval Theory of Authorship*, 9–72, on commentaries and authors; Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, 86–7, on the topos of dedication.

⁴ This very specific use of Foucault’s account of authorship is invited by his study: ‘[C]ertainly it would be worth examining ... what status [the author] has been given, at what moment studies of authenticity and attribution began, in what kind of system of valorization the author was involved’ (141); see my comments on Bourdieu and Chartier’s response to Foucault below.

⁵ ‘Miscellaneity and Vernacularity’, 37.

to read and so 'limit' the meaning of a text. In medieval manuscripts, however, the author's name and all sorts of other useful information about the production or reproduction of a text regularly disappears. Books containing Chaucer's texts tell us very little, if anything, about their author or the conditions for their production.⁶ We know that John Whethamstede, abbot of St Albans, commissioned not only the writing but the binding and decoration of a copy of John Lydgate's life of *Saint Albon* in the mid fifteenth century. But we know this from institutional records, not from any manuscript of the text that Lydgate translated. Several of the surviving copies do not even name Lydgate.⁷

This is the point, amid bibliographical gaps and silences, that my study begins. It describes the place of the medieval author in books produced (or just put to use) during the first century of printing in England: between 1473–4, the year Caxton printed the first book in English, and 1557, the year of the incorporation of the London Stationers' Company. Sixteenth-century volumes such as the edition of Lydgate's *Fall of Princes* printed by Richard Tottel in 1554, or Chaucer's *Workes* printed by Thomas Godfray in 1532, look very different from their often-anonymous, fifteenth-century manuscript analogues: their ascribed title pages identify and laud their authors from the first (see Figs. 1 and 2).⁸ Such books illustrate William A. Ringler's observation that there was rapid growth in the ascription of texts to their writers in the first century of mechanized book production.⁹ But the authors whose works are the basis for my investigation here, Chaucer and Lydgate, are not exclusively names found in printed books. They can be identified within texts as well as in paratext, and in manuscript as well as print.¹⁰ They remind us that the author (or *auctor*, compiler, maker, or poet) was a fully realized historical entity when Caxton started printing in English in 1473–4. They remind us of this in the particular terms suggested by Foucault and by the work of Roland Barthes that lies behind it. Chaucer and Lydgate were once authors in a Romantic sense: charismatic or visionary artists. But as their thoughts became literary

⁶ This is a point made in a study that provided a starting point for my own work, Edwards, 'Chaucer from Manuscript to Print'.

⁷ Howlett, 'Studies in the Works of John Whethamstede', 205–7.

⁸ These books and their contents are described in detail in Chs. 5 and 3 respectively.

⁹ Of extant pre-1500 editions, 30% are attributed; for the 1500 to 1600 period, the figure rises to 80%. See Ringler, *Bibliography and Index of English Verse Printed 1476–1558*, 6–7.

¹⁰ I use this term, as defined and discussed by Genette in *Paratexts*, to mean all information pertaining to a book produced in the book, alongside the text.

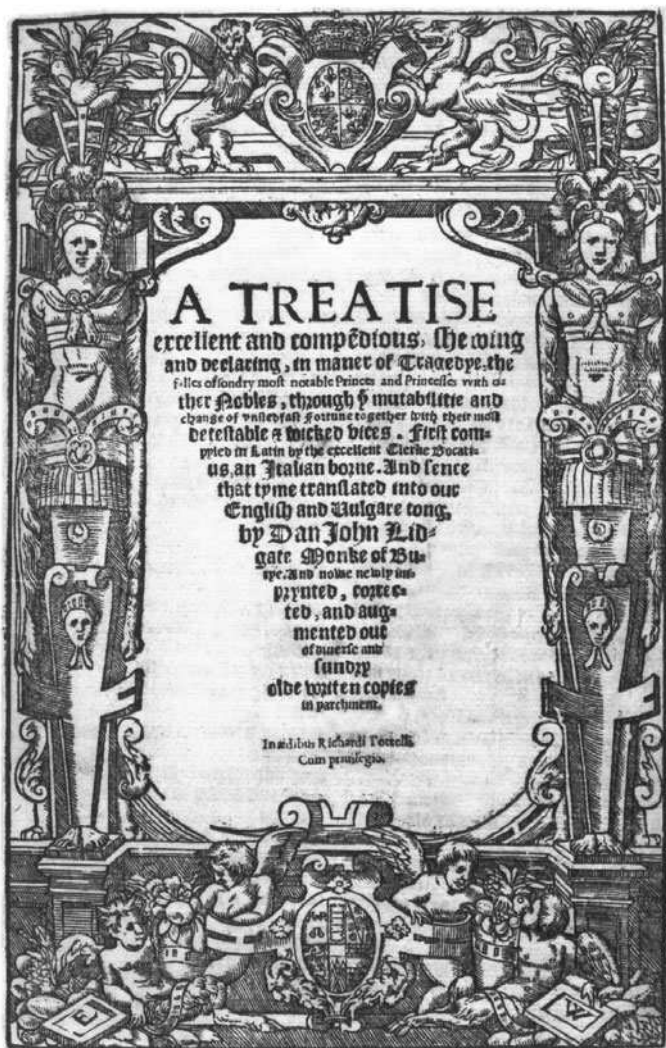


Figure 1. London, British Library, 79 h. 4: Lydgate's *Fall of Princes* (Richard Tottel's edition of 1554), STC 3177, A1r. Reproduced with the permission of the British Library.

works, Chaucer and Lydgate became what every author becomes: an 'effect'—whatever their texts, but also whatever their scribes, printers, readers, biographers, and imitators made of them.¹¹

Much was made of authors before printing in response to a range of intellectual, cultural, and religious as well as bibliographical conditions. For ecclesiastical censors in fifteenth-century England, the name 'Wyclif' was a succinct label for heterodox writings.¹² For Chaucer and his Clerk, for the writers of medieval commentaries and treatises and the makers of learned books, 'Aristotle' is one name for the Western philosophical tradition. The author as a 'functional principle' was not, that is, an invention of the book *per se*. But a question does arise from the study of authors alongside books. This question is not—how did print invent the modern category of the author? It is, rather—what was the impact of print on existing ideas about the authors of literary texts? Or to put it another way, what use were these authors to the 'critical terminology' developed by book producers in the new context of print?

THEORIES OF AUTHORSHIP, PERIODIZATION, AND THE HISTORY OF THE BOOK

Foucault's account of authorship supplies a possible answer to this question and some themes for the discussion that follows. Foucault describes the author as a 'principle of thrift in the proliferation of meaning'. Authors mediate the place of a fictional text in the world. They assign themselves, and they are repeatedly reassigned, responsibility for textual production and they accrue reward and censure accordingly. Their names add value—cultural 'capital'—to texts so that those texts might be promoted by booksellers or canonized by scholars.¹³ This study draws on such ideas about authorship: its central premise is that the figure of the medieval writer organizes and markets textual material, assigns it value, licenses it, sanctions it, or marks it out as illicit. (I suggest below that this argument must be modified by the residual uncertainty associated with acts of authorship and ascription—but the main points

¹¹ Barthes, 'The Death of the Author', in *Image Music Text*, 142–8. See also Biriotti and Miller (eds.), *What Is an Author?*

¹² See Watson, 'Censorship and Cultural Change in Late-Medieval England', 827: Wyclif is named in Article 6 of the 1409 Constitutions of Arundel.

¹³ See Guillory, *Cultural Capital*.

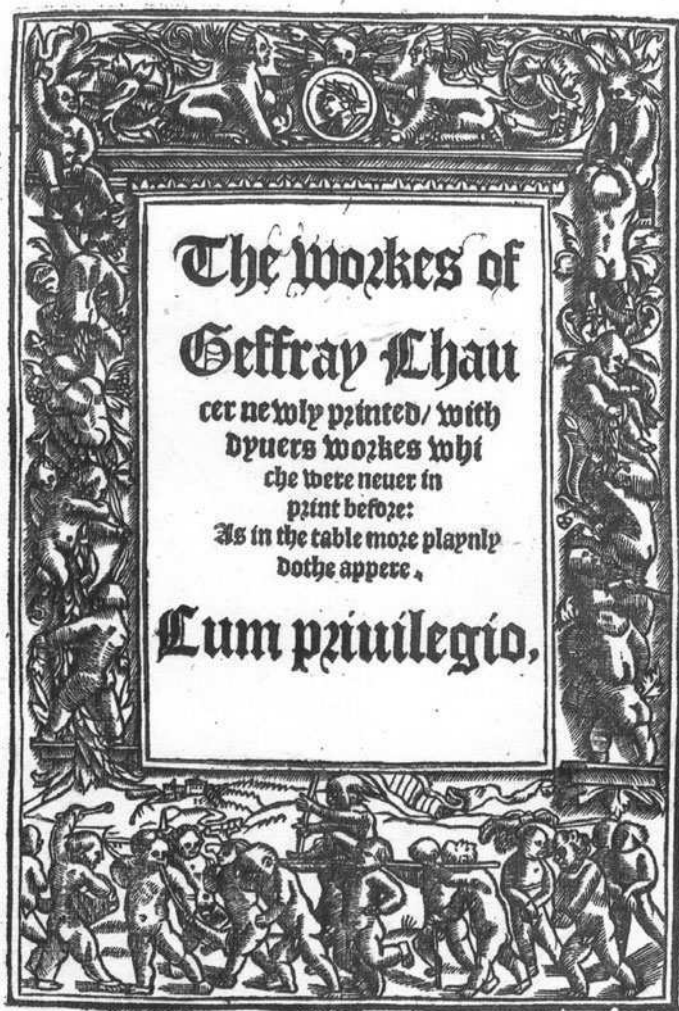


Figure 2. Cambridge, England, Clare College, K. 1. 7: *The Workes of Geffray Chaucer* (edited by William Thynne, printed by Thomas Godfray, 1532), STC 5068, A1r. Reproduced with the permission of the Master, Fellows, and Scholars of Clare College, Cambridge.

suffice for now.) Roger Chartier writes that such an author, restored in this way to the study of literary culture and of history, is ‘constrained [by] the multiple determinations that organize the social space of literary production’.¹⁴ In this study the ‘social space’ for the production of literary books is that of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The books I describe, and the ideas about authors I find there, belong to the new context, if not always the new medium, of print.

A number of studies exist that describe the early modern author in these terms—as a mark of a modern interest in the ownership of texts enabled by speculative print production, for instance, or as evidence of the exercise of authority of various kinds within the culture of the Renaissance.¹⁵ These were the conditions that informed the production of Ben Jonson’s famous, ascribed folio edition of works in 1616.¹⁶ It was in this context that French writers battled for their intellectual property in courts in the early sixteenth century and that English authors and printers sought to obtain and control royal privileges.¹⁷ The fractious and profit-driven business of printing was equally a reason for sixteenth-century gentlemen poets to develop a rhetoric of private, coterie authorship—to avoid print or disavow, in print, their interest in printed publication.¹⁸

The interchangeable use of the words ‘early modern’ and ‘Renaissance’ here is deliberate: these terms describe the ‘social space of literary production’ for this study by indicating the period of concern to me, but also by raising questions about traditional ways of defining that period. The word Renaissance suggests the enduring influence of Jacob

¹⁴ Chartier, *The Order of Books*, 29. See Bourdieu’s argument that ‘it can only be an unjustifiable abstraction ... to seek the source of the understanding of cultural productions in these productions themselves, taken in isolation and divorced from the conditions of their production and utilisation’, in *Homo Academicus*, p. xvii. Bourdieu takes issue with Foucault for setting aside, in some of his later writings, the socio-historical analysis of his earlier work (see Rabinow and Dreyfus, *Michel Foucault*, pp. xxiv–xxv, 79–100).

¹⁵ Halasz, *The Marketplace of Print*; Rose, *Authors and Owners*; Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*; Helgerson, *Self-Crowned Laureates*.

¹⁶ Loewenstein, *Ben Jonson and Possessive Authorship*.

¹⁷ Brown, *Poets, Patrons and Printers*; Grant Ferguson, ‘A Study of English Book-Trade Privileges During the Reign of Henry VIII’.

¹⁸ See Saunders, ‘The Stigma of Print’. Stephen W. May argues strongly against the claim that this ‘stigma’ kept writers’ works out of print in, ‘Tudor Aristocrats and the Mythical “Stigma of Print”’, but see Wall, *The Imprint of Gender*, 1–22, 227–78 and Marotti, *Manuscript, Print, and the English Renaissance Lyric*, 209–90, for assessment of the effects of the *idea* of print production on authors’ self-representation in manuscript and print.

Burckhardt's definition of Europe's golden age of classical rediscovery and humanist achievement, and the related description of a dark or barbaric medieval period. It is a conceit that can be traced to the early sixteenth century itself, to those humanist and especially reformation ideologies that insisted on the alterity of the recent past. The term early modern signals more recent scholarly interest in the wider effects of economic, political, and social change in the period, including the advent of print.¹⁹ James Simpson has recently argued persuasively that the rhetoric of Renaissance change belongs, in the first instance, to the years immediately after the reformation in England.²⁰ On one side of the boundary established by that rhetoric is the traditional, but still vigorous and changeful social, political, and religious culture of the late Middle Ages—complete with much that has latterly been defined as early modern, from vernacular religion to subjectivity.²¹ On the other side is an emergent culture, no less vital and complex, of early modern England, defined by decades of reform and counter-reformation, sanctioned by the Elizabethan Settlement, radically at odds with its own history. In as much as it is self-defining, this early modern period depends upon the rejection of the medieval past and it depends equally upon the recuperation of those elements of an earlier English culture that reveal inconsistencies in such a periodic scheme. Writers of and about the Renaissance have long singled out as exceptional, and in doing so laid claim to, humanism and the influence of Italian writers on a tradition of English letters; the emergence and enrichment of a literary vernacular; and the most famous writers of the Middle Ages, especially Wyclif and Chaucer, whom, as John Foxe explains in his *Actes and monumentes*, 'seemeth to be a right Wicleuian'.²² Medieval scholars like Simpson have restored such writers to their own moment in the late Middle Ages and found them, there, less than exceptional. However, in this discussion, the medieval author remains a part of the fabric of early modern or Renaissance culture *and* remains medieval. New ways

¹⁹ Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*. See Braden and Kerrigan, *The Idea of the Renaissance*; also useful is Hadfield's discussion in *Literature, Politics and National Identity*, especially his argument that to avoid the traditional term 'Renaissance' is 'to write as if... one has escaped the burden of a subsequent history of interpretation' (16).

²⁰ Simpson, *Reform and Cultural Revolution*.

²¹ See Aers, 'A Whisper in the Ear of Early Modernists'.

²² *STC* 11223, DDD4r (1570 edition). See Strohm, *Theory and the Premodern Text*, on the way that periodization creates 'wrinkle[s] in time—or at least time as literary history normally portrays it' (85).

of representing the medieval author in print are linked in this study to the Renaissance recuperation of classical traditions and to early modern social and religious change, but they also remain inseparable from their past. The medieval author in print is prefigured—or, as Wynkyn de Worde describes Chaucer in one early edition, ‘preclared’—by medieval traditions.²³ The Middle Ages to which this author belongs, as Umberto Eco suggests, was not reconstructed by later periods from scratch, but ‘always mended or patched up, as something in which we still live’.²⁴

Eco’s image of the past as *bricolage*, a patchwork of old and new, informs my approach to the history of the book as well as to the history of cultural change and of authorship in this study. Commercial book production has been very successfully appropriated for the early modern period. Manuscript precedents for printing are often sidelined or reduced to imprecise formulations: for instance that scribal work and the distant authority of patristic writers made all authorship in the Middle Ages ‘collaborative’.²⁵ The press is claimed—as it was by early reformers²⁶—for radical change in literary, political, and religious culture rather than for continuity with the past. Change is described as the essence of ‘print culture’. I use the term ‘print culture’ in the title of this book to suggest the scope of my study, but I use it with caution. Elizabeth Eisenstein and Walter J. Ong’s idea of a shift from the oral residue and writerly ‘presence’ of scribal culture to the ‘fixity’ and revolutions of print has recently given way to different accounts of the arrival of the press.²⁷ Adrian Johns argues that new ideas about books, and new institutions and mechanisms for the control of texts, emerged only as people deemed these the best way to deal with the press or describe its prolific effects. David McKitterick identifies a slow ‘search for order’ in the work of scribes as well as printers and the responses of users as well as producers of books.²⁸ This study will contribute some detailed findings to these revisionist histories of the book and print culture as it argues that the medieval author was a mechanism for ordering the new meanings of texts in print. It will also resist the teleological drift of much work on early printing, and the abstraction and technological determinism inherent in the notion of

²³ STC 5092, A1r.

²⁴ Eco, *Travels in Hyperreality*, 61–72 (67–8).

²⁵ See for instance Woodmansee, ‘The Author Effect’, 15–17.

²⁶ See King, ‘“The Light of Printing”’.

²⁷ Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change*; Ong, *Orality and Literacy*.

²⁸ Johns, *The Nature of the Book*, and McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript and the Search for Order*.

‘print culture’ itself. I am interested in what follows in the importance of authors to the arrangement and promotion of texts in medieval manuscripts as well as printed books. I am also interested in the *stuff* of bibliography—in books, manuscript and print, ordered and disordered, rather than in an abstract ‘Book’;²⁹ in the special capacity of bibliography to describe those books as objects replete with minute, sometimes inscrutable evidence of their own production and utilization; in D. F. McKenzie’s idea that such evidence is the basis for a ‘sociology of texts’—study of ‘the composition, formal design, and transmission of texts by writers, printers, and publishers; their distribution through different communities by wholesalers, retailers, and teachers; their collection and classification by librarians; their meaning for, and—I must add—their creative regeneration by, readers’.³⁰ The history of books presented here finds much that is new: the medieval author and medieval texts recast by shifts in cultural and technological conditions for book production. But in *Print Culture and the Medieval Author* books are also open to ‘creative regeneration’. They have been and continue to be patched up in ways that challenge our assumptions about what it meant to read or print a text in the early modern period, or to describe a medieval writer in a Renaissance or reformation context, or to ascribe a literary work to an author in the first place.

THE AUTHOR AND *THEN* THE ADVENT OF PRINT

A long history of ideas about the author is, I have suggested, central to my study of the medieval author in print. Students of the Renaissance book often acknowledge the precedents set by authors of the classical period—from Horatian constructions of the idea of poetic fame to Martial’s self-conscious depiction of his texts as rolls and books sent to patrons or the market-place.³¹ One of the points I wish to make in this study is that the very accommodating idea of the author represented by classical tradition did not have to be reinvented by the Renaissance. It was part of the recent as well as antique past. The author was a way

²⁹ See Dane, *The Myth of Print Culture*, 1–31, on this distinction.

³⁰ McKenzie, *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts*, 12.

³¹ See Loewenstein, ‘The Script in the Marketplace’, n. 31, for a brief account of relevant scholarship.

of managing with the idea of the text in the world of the Middle Ages as well as in the eras before and after it. The work of A. J. Minnis on the *auctor* of the Latin Middle Ages—a name (such as ‘Aristotle’) added to margins, fore-edges, commentaries, and finding lists, cited as an authority, or turned into an organizing principle for anthologies—is important here.³² The late medieval scholastic and monastic writers and producers of books whom Minnis describes were involved in the transmission and exegesis of Scripture and of the writings of the Church Fathers. The authority for both was ultimately divine, but the context for transmission was that of a post-lapsarian world. Scripture, and writings upon it, had to be copied out, commented on, glossed, compiled, corrected, and decorated by men, who were prone to error. The emergence of a complex ‘medieval theory of authorship’, which Minnis argues was most striking in the twelfth- and thirteenth-century writings of the Latin West, can be linked to problems created by the ‘composition, recomposition, and decomposition’ of God’s Word in the world. Bonaventure’s quadripartite formulation is perhaps the most famous of the attempts to define what it meant to write, or to describe a writer, in these conditions:

[Q]uadruplex est modus faciendi librum. Aliquis enim scribit aliena, nihil addendo vel mutando; et iste mere dicitur *scriptor*. Aliquis scribit aliena addendo, sed non de suo; et iste *compilator* dicitur. Aliquis scribit et aliena et sua, sed aliena tamquam principalia, et sua tamquam annexa ad evidentiam; et iste dicitur *commentator*, non auctor. Aliquis scribit et sua aliena, sed sua tamquam principalia, aliena tamquam annexa ad confirmationem; et talis debet dici *auctor*.

[The method of making a book is fourfold. For someone writes the materials of others, adding or changing nothing, and this person is said to be merely the *scribe*. Someone else writes the materials of others, adding but nothing of his own, and this person is said to be the *compiler*. Someone else writes both the materials of other men, and of his own, but the materials of others as the principal materials, and his own annexed for the purpose of clarifying them, and this person is said to be the *commentator*, not the author. Someone else writes both his own materials and those of others, but his own as the principal materials, and the materials of others annexed for the purpose of confirming his own, and such must be called the *author*].³³

³² *Medieval Theory of Authorship*; see also Rouse and Rouse, *Authentic Witnesses*, 469–94.

³³ Stegmüller, *Repertorium Commentariorum in Sententias Petri Lombardi*, i. 111; translation based on Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship*, 94.

The definitions here are highly nuanced. On the one hand, to call someone an *auctor* is to assign him some ability to control language, to lay claim to his 'own' words, but also to affirm the meaning of those words by annexing those of other *auctores*. On the other hand, therefore, to describe an *auctor* is to define him according to the proportion, and not the status, of the material written. An author writes more of, but not all of, a text. Some authority and some part of the process is always extrinsic. A range of other positions for the medieval writer are offered as a result: *compiler*, *commentator*, or 'mere' *scriptor*. The account of work done by the last of these writers, the scribe, as Elizabeth J. Bryan argues, may be better translated as 'wholly' his own, rather than 'merely' his own: 'Bonaventure's Latin does not praise any one act of writing more than any other.'³⁴ In this passage, Bonaventure's theory of authorship is one that responds to the juxtaposition of the monolithic meaning of the Word or of the words of great men on Scripture, and proliferating human words in books, by simultaneously assigning and mediating authority for the act of producing or reproducing a text.

In her great history of the Western press, Eisenstein cites Bonaventure in order to describe medieval conditions for writing and authorship but does not attend to vernacular traditions, which rather overlap than map on to already diverse Latin ones.³⁵ One could consider, as Bryan has, the way that Anglo-Saxon and slightly later writers—like the 'Cynewulf' who writes his name in runes alongside his text, or the author of the early Middle English *Life of St Margaret* who makes Margaret the author of the 'boc writ of mi lif-lade'—developed a vocabulary for authorship.³⁶ It is not possible to detach author and copyist in many of these texts: both are writers, both write the book and ask for the reader or listener's prayers. One could, alternatively, consider the clerkly 'voice' of authorship in Latin, French, and Anglo-Norman courtly texts, the voice of the literate servants of noble households, who might expect advancement or patronage as well as spiritual reward for their work, but who also perceived the hubris of such expectations, and anticipated unstable processes of both oral and scribal transmission.³⁷ The careers and writings of the likes of Marie de France or Christine de Pisan might be set alongside a history of Trecento Italian vernacular writing,

³⁴ Bryan, *Collaborative Meaning in Medieval Scribal Culture*, 19.

³⁵ *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change*, i. 121–2.

³⁶ Cited from Bryan, *Collaborative Meaning in Medieval Scribal Culture*, 3.

³⁷ Among many relevant studies, see Huot, *From Song to Book*, and De Looze, *Pseudo-Autobiography in the Fourteenth Century*.

which suggests other kinds of authorial presence in the later Middle Ages.³⁸ Petrarch's efforts to supervise scribes and assemble a canon of writings under his own name set important new precedents; the claims made for the vulgar tongue by Dante necessarily elevated the worth of those who employed it; Boccaccio's self-deprecating guise as the compiler of the tales in the *Decameron* was a model for Chaucer's own compilation of *The Canterbury Tales*. The risks and opportunities for these and similar continental writers were not those of the cloistered and university-trained copyists of Scripture. But they *were* those that attended publication: the place of the text in the world, the reputation of its writer. The perils and possibilities involved in making a text are equally evident in late medieval Italian manuscripts that assert the canonical place of the *Commedia* by depicting a laurel-wreathed Dante while diminishing its vulgarity with Latin commentary in a familiar scholastic style, and in the fifteenth-century books that made the name of Petrarch, and selections of his writings, a more and more popular way of arranging Italian vernacular poetry.³⁹

In late medieval England, too, 'that which', as Anne Middleton argues, 'went without saying for the writer, the knowledge internal to his practice' was made external in texts and in books in a variety of circumstances with various effects.⁴⁰ Middleton and Kathryn Kerby-Fulton describe the 'bibliographical ego' of writers like William Langland who hoped for reward, spiritual or material, but whose work was hampered by the slow and destabilizing process of scribal transmission; by concerns that worldly hubris would attract censure; and by the fear that the writers or copyists of texts would be censored or punished. The last concern was especially acute for those, like Langland, who wrote in the context of sometimes violent political and religious change at the end of the Middle Ages and for those writing in English, a language that was perhaps more meaningful than French and Latin at a distance from centres of royal and ecclesiastical authority. A self-identifying English writer at this time indicated his or her affinity with a new kind of linguistic sovereignty and seized upon new opportunities to earn a reputation as a producer of widely-read texts. However, opportunities were also risks, embedded

³⁸ For some relevant work on the French authors, see Quilligan, 'The Name of the Author'; Jambeck, 'The Fables of Marie de France'; Runte, 'Marie de France dans ses Fables'.

³⁹ Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship*, 211–17; Chartier, *The Order of Books*, 54–5; Petrucci, *Writer and Readers in Medieval Italy*, 193–235.

⁴⁰ 'William Langland's "Kynde Name"' (21).

signatures and ambiguous claims about authorship were evasions, and the fraught events of 1381 and attempts by monarchs and ecclesiastical lords from Richard II to Archbishop Arundel to censor unsanctioned religious writing supply contexts for the very complex ways in which fourteenth- and fifteenth-century writers wrote their names.⁴¹

Scholars interested in the age of Chaucer and Lydgate, that is, have a growing sense of how expressions of authorial identity were shaped in specific and historical terms in late medieval England. But we have only tentative working models for the intersection of these contexts with Bonaventure's *modus faciendi librum*—the making of books. What relationship did the sudden increase in discourse in Middle English of a licit and an illicit nature just before, during, and after the reign of Richard II bear to changes in the medieval book trade? Was the formation of the London misteries of Textwriters, Scriveners, and Limners by 1357 and the foundation of the Stationers' Company in 1403, related to these changes, and in what way do they suggest new modes of book production, removed from the traditional centres of monastery and university?⁴² What was the impact of the 'paper revolution'?⁴³ Did the cost of books fall?⁴⁴ Can we describe the mass production or even a speculative trade in medieval manuscripts? If so, did ways of thinking about books, or those who made them change? Did book makers and sellers feel the need to respond to, or even properly understand, such acts of censorship as Arundel's Constitutions of 1409?⁴⁵ Work on these questions has begun, but a clearer account of late medieval manuscript production might better inform our reading of Langland's choice to embed his name anagrammatically in *Piers Plowman*; of Chaucer's use, and addresses to, a scribe, perhaps Adam Pinkhurst, copyist of the Hengwrt and Ellesmere *Canterbury Tales*, and the anonymous (or more precisely ascription-less) circulation of so many of his texts; of the

⁴¹ Kerby-Fulton, 'Langland and the Bibliographical Ego'; see also Fisher, 'A Language Policy for Lancastrian England'.

⁴² Blayney, *The Stationers' Company before the Charter, 1403–1557*, 9–13; Christianson, *Memorials of the Book Trade in Medieval London* and 'The Rise of London's Book-Trade'; cf. Petrucci, *Writers and Readers in Medieval Italy*, 179–200 on the new 'freedom of writing' (183) in Italian city states.

⁴³ Lyall, 'Materials'.

⁴⁴ The best work on English book prices is still Bell, 'The Price of Books in Medieval England', who is not able to track the changing cost of books but does note that paper made books cheaper: a 1480 Cambridge provision states that no guardian of a chest is to accept a book made of paper as a pledge (321). See also Kwakkel, 'A New Type of Book for a New Type of Reader'.

⁴⁵ Watson, 'Censorship and Cultural Change in Late-Medieval England'.

availability of Gower's *Confessio Amantis* for rapid reproduction soon after the writer's death; of Hoccleve and Capgrave's copies of ascribed 'editions' of their own works.⁴⁶

Chapter 1 of this book deals tentatively with some of these questions, but detailed work is beyond the scope of the present study. The preceding account of the medieval author before the advent of print is meant simply to identify a principle important to my work. The author, named or unnamed, *has always been* a way for those who produce texts—writers, *scops*, scribes, printers—and those who use, read, censor, or celebrate them to describe the place of those texts in the world. And the text's place in the world has often needed close description. 'Libri volant [books fly]' writes St Bernard of Clairvaux in the twelfth century:⁴⁷ if, in all their many forms, books have a common nature, it is perhaps as objects designed to convey and contain texts, to assign them boundaries, and paradoxically, to enable their traffic and their reception. Printing involves the replication of a text in multiple, more-or-less identical copies.⁴⁸ It expedites the outcome of any process of cultural production—that this process will, as Michel De Certeau puts it, be 'confronted by an entirely different kind of production, called consumption'.⁴⁹ And printing as a process has typically taken place, at least in the West, within a motivating framework of pecuniary profit rather than (or as well as) spiritual or cultural reward.⁵⁰ Alexandra Halasz argues persuasively that printing loosened the text from any idea of stability that might attend its identification with 'university, Crown, and Church', or, we might add, monastery, noble household, court, or the hands of its author.⁵¹ But manuscripts, including fourteenth- and fifteenth-century manuscripts containing English texts, were already moveable. They were written by

⁴⁶ Mooney's work, for instance, continues to provide important new information: see 'Professional Scribes?' and 'Chaucer's Scribe' (which was not available when this study was completed); other important studies include Doyle and Parkes, 'The Production of Copies of the *Canterbury Tales* and the *Confessio Amantis* in the Early Fifteenth Century'; Nicholson, 'Poet and Scribe in the Manuscripts of Gower's *Confessio Amantis*'; Bowers, 'Hoccleve's Huntington Holographs'; Lucas, *From Author to Audience*; Boffey, 'The Reputation and Circulation of Chaucer's Lyrics in the Fifteenth Century'.

⁴⁷ He laments the rapid diffusion of Abelard's writings: *Epistulae* CLXXXIX (PL 182: 355); cited in Petrucci, *Writers and Readers in Medieval Italy*, 169.

⁴⁸ For some examples of just how different 'identical' copies of Chaucer editions can be, see Dane, 'In Search of Stow's Chaucer'.

⁴⁹ De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 31.

⁵⁰ For broad studies of printing and commerce, see Plant, *The English Book Trade*, and some important new work in St Clair, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period*.

⁵¹ *The Marketplace of Print* (4).

authors so that they could be passed to patrons or posterity. They were produced by professional scribes who worked in mercantile contexts, like Adam Pinkhurst; they were sold along with the residue of their owners' estates; exchanged for credit or for ready money.⁵² Our understanding of the effects of the advent of printing needs to be modified accordingly. Printing *accelerated* an existing traffic in texts, and changes we perceive as being in some way related to the newness of print—including the emergence of the author—cannot be detached from old ways of thinking about what it means for a text to be written, copied, or read.

CHAUCER AND LYDGATE AS AUTHORS

These points are central to my interpretation of the place of the medieval author in the context of printing. My first intention in this book is to consider in detail how representations of authors mediated the process by which books that were produced in commercial contexts and by mechanized means became a part of the culture of late medieval or Renaissance England; my second is to show how ideas about authors were liable to shift and slide. I argue that by ascribing printed texts to Chaucer and to Lydgate early printers implied that there was some limit to the meaning of the fictions contained by the books that they produced. By doing so, somewhat paradoxically, they sought to promote the movement of those books. They assigned a particular kind of value to the goods they sold, but they also made those goods—literary texts—available for the multiple determinations of multiple customers, for the assignment of new values and the overturning of intended ones. The difference between the medieval author I identify in early printed books in England and Foucault's author (or more precisely author-function) is therefore the difference between a reductive category—one that manages, controls, and answers—and a category that is *also* productive, that proliferates, energizes, and changes.⁵³

⁵² Mooney, 'Chaucer's Scribe'; on books in English wills, see Cavanaugh, *Books Privately Owned in England 1300–1450*.

⁵³ Foucault involves the 'author' in fictional play ('the mark of the writer is reduced to nothing more than the singularity of his absence; he must assume the role of the dead man in the game of writing', 'What Is an Author?', 143); I wish to make his 'author-function'—which he identifies as a textual effect but repeatedly describes in socio-historical contexts—a limit to this 'game' *and* as a part of it.

Chaucer has long been considered important to the place of medieval texts in early modern printed books. He was the first English author whose *œuvre* was assembled in a monumental folio edition of *Workes* in 1532; there, he presides over the organization and limitation of the meaning of vernacular literature in print. Arthur F. Marotti writes that 'the Renaissance editions of Chaucer set the precedent for sheltering lyric verse within a large, prestigious collection';⁵⁴ and many writers have associated the *Workes* of 1532 with the process by which reformation thinkers and book producers recuperated those expressions of medieval culture that did not disrupt their iconoclastic or commercial purpose.⁵⁵

However, there is an extent to which Chaucerian authorship is disruptive of every purpose: Chaucer has already imagined the way that the assignment of a text to an author opens up, even as it seems to close down, the possibilities of fiction. Consider, for instance, that famous collection of author's authors, *The Canterbury Tales*. In the *Tales*, fiction is productive, it moves things along—towards a destination, in pursuit of spiritual meaning, or at least to the end of a contest and some sort of reward. But, as the rather problematic idea of pilgrimage in the late fourteenth century suggests, and Chaucerian tales that 'sownen into sinne' imply, the journey of fiction is equally a distraction from the business of a pious life (*The Canterbury Tales*, x. 1087). Pilgrimage is done 'more for þe helpe of ... bodies þan for þe helpe of ... soulis', complains the Lollard William Thorpe; worse, it turns men and women into 'greete iangelers, tale tellers and lyeris'.⁵⁶ The answer to the question 'how can one reduce the great peril ... with which fiction threatens our world'—'with the author'—is likewise problematic in a Chaucerian scheme of things. Critics of the *Tales* routinely offer authors as answers to questions about Chaucerian fiction. They are the subjects of the larger grammatical, rhetorical, psychoanalytic, homosocial, or historical structures that underpin his texts, and points at which stable meanings for those texts converge. The Squire's unfinished, unaccomplished tale, for instance, is straightforwardly meaningful in readings in which the Squire is the 'subject' of his text, afflicted by unstable structures of feudalism, troubled by Freudian issues of literary paternity. The tale's meaning is likewise clear if we identify the author as Chaucer the great

⁵⁴ Marotti, *Manuscript, Print, and the English Renaissance Lyric*, 210–11.

⁵⁵ Simpson, *Reform and Cultural Revolution*, 41–2. See also Mowat, 'Constructing the Author'.

⁵⁶ Hudson (ed.), *Two Wycliffite Texts ... The Testimony of William Thorpe 1407*, 63, ll. 1289–90, 64, l. 1331.

English 'ironist', who either wittily writes an inept tale for an immature teller, or finds himself at the end of his life unable to allocate a tale to such a teller, or a teller to such a tale, sick of romance, or just incapable of sorting the foul papers on his writing desk.⁵⁷

Limits to our ideas about authors help to make some sense out of Chaucer's texts. But the fact that ideas about authors produce such inconsistent, often mutually exclusive, interpretations reminds us that in fiction limits are not fixed. The authors of the *Tales* do not serve as still points in the spinning, dazzling world of Chaucerian tale-telling. They are themselves fictions. Their texts are, on the one hand, 'written to be read *as if* they were spoken' and, on the other hand, by way of intermittent 'unimpersonated artistry' and conspicuous textuality (we are to 'turne over the leef and chese another tale', 1. 3177), reminders that every text involves an absence of a self.⁵⁸ The author is always missing from the text, because he or she is neither identical to the 'subject' positions offered by its spoken or written forms, nor present as those forms, and thus the author's literary renown, endure over time.

It is my contention that Chaucer, the author of *The Canterbury Tales*, is an author in this sense. It is these literary or textual concerns that elicit his Retraction; persistent use of the rhetorical device of modesty *topoi*; outright denial of the value of secular fiction. In the last tale (excepting the Parson's prose treatise) to be told on the pilgrimage, the Manciple offers us some maternal wisdom:

My sone, be war, and be noon auctor newe
Of tidynges, wheither they been false or trewe.

(IX. 359–60)

There are plenty, indeed a plethora, of authors in the *Tales*—the pilgrims; the authorities they cite and refute (including their mothers); the compiler who goes on a pilgrimage, and writes what he hears; 'Chaucer' who is the Man of Law's story-telling nemesis; the poet who we believe was a master of verse form and genre; the 'maker of the book' who may have penned the Retraction as a conclusion to the *Tales*, but then 'took his leave' and left it to be affixed by some interfering scribe (see *Tales*, x, after 1080); Chaucer, whose role as a father of English

⁵⁷ See Lawton, *Chaucer's Narrators*, 106–29.

⁵⁸ See Leicester, *The Disenchanted Self*, 1–31 (13, 3).

fiction has been variously understood over time. But the answer that these authors provide to the questions, dangers, and even opportunities presented by fiction turns out to be as slippery as the stories themselves. There is 'noon auctor' in the precise sense that there is no one author of a text, or, at least, not one author who is not a fiction.

In the absence of a single position for the author in *The Canterbury Tales*, we are left with the Chaucer 'effect', the author who is a 'function' of the creation, circulation, and interpretation of his texts, paratext, and others' texts about his work. Critics are in the habit of understanding this process, especially in its earliest stages, as a simplification of the complexities of Chaucerian writing. They argue that those who responded to Chaucer in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, especially, rendered him a 'congenial soul', an infantilizing father figure, 'drab', or 'dull'.⁵⁹ One of the aims of the present study is to challenge this idea—to suggest that early representations of Chaucer were a source of, as well as solution for, the problems raised in his texts, books, and in the work of writers and copyists who followed him. Another aim is to describe Lydgate—usually considered the first and the most dull of the dull Chaucerians—as a more complex sort of author. The pilgrim-authors of *The Canterbury Tales* give shape to Chaucerian authorship. It is 'noon' authorship. How are we to deal, then, with the self-described monk-poet 'John Lydgate' in *The Siege of Thebes*, a Canterbury pilgrim, a fictional presence alongside the Host and his company and 'father' Chaucer himself?

Lydgate's text is more than a prequel to or attempt to outdo The Knight's Tale and so overwrite Chaucer's debilitating example.⁶⁰ It is a deliberate depression of the residual hope of Chaucer's *Tales*—that fiction might just lead us somewhere worthwhile. Lydgate and his companions have been to Becket's shrine but the visit has not redeemed their journey. The Host's interest is now wholly with the 'solaas' and

⁵⁹ See Trigg, *Congenial Souls* and Lerer, *Chaucer and His Readers*, especially 85–116: I mean to augment rather than recast the findings of these important studies. For drabness and dullness, see Lewis, *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century*, and Lawton's nuanced, historicized reading in 'Dullness and the Fifteenth Century'. Simpson's *Reform and Cultural Revolution* does much to rehabilitate the dull and the drab age; see especially 44–50 on Lydgate.

⁶⁰ Spearing, 'Lydgate's *Canterbury Tale*'; Bowers, 'The Tale of Beryn and *The Siege of Thebes*'.

‘game’ of storytelling (*The Canterbury Tales*, I. 798, 853). ‘“[P]reche not”’ he says to Lydgate, but

‘Gynne some tale / of myrth or of gladnesse,
And noddë not / with thyn heuy bekke!
Telle vs some thyng / that draweþ to effecte
Only of Ioyë !’

(*The Siege of Thebes*, ll. 167–71)

As his regiminal vocabulary suggests, his concern, having reached Becket’s shrine, is with the health not of souls but of bodies.⁶¹ Lydgate has come to the shrine after sickness; the Host misinterprets his journey of devout thanksgiving as one undertaken in a search of a physical cure:

‘Strong notty ale / wol makë you to route.
Tak a pylow / þat ye lye not lowe!
Yif nedë be / Sparë not to blowe!
To holdë wynde / , be my[n] opynyoun,
Wil engendre / Collikes passioun
And makë men to greuen / on her roppys,
Whan thei han filled / her mawës *and* her croppys.’

(ll. 110–16)

What prompts this outburst and its rather exuberant account of fleshly corruption is the physical state of Lydgate—‘so pale / al deuoyde of blood’ (l. 89). James Simpson argues that the tale told by Lydgate is a tale about a mutable world, a world in which not only bodies but capricious rulers, those of noble ‘blood’, cede to misfortune, and no advisor—no old story or piece of authoritative wisdom—can contain their belligerent and bloody excesses.⁶² It is a world in which fiction is perilous because it is empty; tales may be told, journeys undertaken, but they will fail to achieve their moral purpose. The author of fiction, the author *in* fiction, is displaced: Lydgate the pilgrim fails along with his tale. His body, at first broken and colourless, is entirely absent at the end of his text. The poet does not restore his story to a Chaucerian (and thereby authorial) framework. The text ends not with the pilgrimage, but an imperative:

⁶¹ See Bernard, ‘Vitality and Vulnerability in the Late Medieval Church’, on the perceived healthful benefits of pilgrimage.

⁶² Simpson, “‘Dysemol Daies and Fatal Hours’”.

And lat vs prey / to hym that is most good,

 And of oure synnys / *parfit* amendement,
 And Ioye eternal / whan we hennës wende.
 Of my talë / thus I make an ende.

(ll. 4709–16)

However, at the last, the author's prayer, like his onward journey, is unwritten.

Lydgate, I would suggest, places no more trust in the author as a stabilizing force in fiction than his 'master' Chaucer does, and he utilizes Chaucer's disruptive fictions accordingly.⁶³ He names himself in more texts than any other Middle English writer, but in ways that, like Chaucer's moments of self-identification, suggest authors control the response of the world to more-or-less freely circulating texts, but also become themselves fictions, free to circulate, liable to change.⁶⁴ The poet, having declared that he was '[b]orn in a vyllage which callyd is Lydgate' in *The Fall of Princes* (ix. 3431), says that he

wyl *procede* forth with whyte and blak;
 And where I faylle let Lydgate ber the lak.

(*The Fall of Princes*, ix. 3441–2)

He imagines authorship as a sort of landscape, traversed by a censorious reader who, with any luck, will stumble across the fissures between 'I' and 'Lydgate', cracks into which blame might disappear, but—and this holds true for all the evasive, playful, ambiguous representations of the author described in this book—in which one stable meaning for the text will be lost as well.

SCOPE AND ENDS

Chaucer and Lydgate tell only a small component of the tale that might be told about the author of late Middle English literature. A part of the

⁶³ Lydgate first describes Chaucer as master in *The Life of Our Lady*, l. 1628.

⁶⁴ See the list of texts ascribed to Lydgate by MacCracken, 'The Lydgate Canon'. The works in which he names himself (in some extant versions) are: *Virtues of the Mass* (not noted by MacCracken); *Guy of Warwick*; *The Troy Book*; *The Siege of Thebes*; *The Fall of Princes*; *The Daunce of Machabree* (not noted by MacCracken); *Stans Puer ad Mensam*; and 'Look in thy Merour'.

story belongs to Gower and Langland, to Hoccleve, Burgh, Bokenham, Scots 'makars', and a host of other named and unnamed writers of the fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century 'Chaucerian' tradition.⁶⁵ Concerns about the status of utterances and their creators are reoriented in Middle English religious writing—in the words, oral and scribal, of *The Book of Margery Kempe* for instance, or in the body of writings associated in manuscript and print with Richard Rolle.⁶⁶ At various points in the discussion I will return to the examples provided by these authors. However, Chaucer and Lydgate will remain my main concern precisely because they set rather generous but also very useful limits for the study of the medieval author and print culture in England up to 1557. More than fifty texts in English that are no longer printed as Chaucer's have been ascribed to him at some time⁶⁷ and 160 are still in the 'Lydgate Canon'.⁶⁸ A great many of these were in print during the period considered by this book.⁶⁹ Distinct differences, moreover, emerge in the treatment of Lydgate and Chaucer's printed texts. Most of those linked to Chaucer had been printed under his name by 1557.⁷⁰ Far fewer had been attributed to Lydgate. The definition and expansion of his canon had to wait for the mid to late sixteenth-century endeavours of John Bale and John Stow and the more recent work of Joseph Ritson and Henry Noble MacCracken.⁷¹ I consider

⁶⁵ On Gower, see Strohm, 'A Note on Gower's Persona'; for Langland, see the discussion above; on the Chaucerian tradition, see Spearing, *Medieval to Renaissance in English Poetry*; Lerer, *Chaucer and His Readers*; and Fox, 'The Scottish Chaucerians'.

⁶⁶ See Watson, *Richard Rolle and the Invention of Authority*, 1–27; on the recasting of Margery Kempe's role in early sixteenth-century editions, see Summit, *Lost Property*, 126–38.

⁶⁷ *The Riverside Chaucer* presents thirty-one works as Chaucer's (*The Complaint of Mars* and *Venus* as separate poems and four 'poems not ascribed to Chaucer in the manuscripts'); the apocryphal items are described differently in each of the following: Skeat (ed.), *Chaucerian and Other Pieces*; Hammond, *Chaucer* (who lists more than sixty texts printed 'as' Chaucer's, 406–63; some of these are clearly ascribed when printed in Chaucer editions to Gower, Scogan, and Lydgate and some are accepted as Chaucer's); Peck, *Chaucer's Romaunt of the Rose and Boece ... and Chaucerian Apocrypha*; Robbins, 'The Chaucerian Apocrypha' who notes that 'some one hundred miscellaneous poems have been ... linked to Chaucer' (1061). For discussion see Bonner, 'The Genesis of the Chaucerian Apocrypha' and Forni, *The Chaucerian Apocrypha*.

⁶⁸ MacCracken, 'The Lydgate Canon'.

⁶⁹ See the index of editions containing works linked to Chaucer or Lydgate at the end of this study.

⁷⁰ The best guides on this point are Hammond, *Chaucer* and Brewer (ed.), *Geoffrey Chaucer. The Works, 1532*.

⁷¹ MacCracken reprints all earlier lists of Lydgate's works, including those of Bale, Stow, Tanner, and Ritson alongside his own list in 'The Lydgate Canon'.

printed editions of texts by both these authors in part because the stories these books tell are so noticeably different—because Lydgate's example, in particular, disturbs any straightforward account of a shift from anonymity to the ascription of texts in print. Finally, in the case of both writers, a diverse history of manuscript transmission usefully precedes an early printed tradition. Chaucer and Lydgate's texts are to be found in books written by commercial scribes and amateur household ones; in manuscript booklets and in continuously copied, monumental codices; in presentation copies and in orally transmitted, extracted, or just remembered forms, scribbled down on flyleaves or in margins. Although they are not my primary concern, I hope to begin to restore these books, which were still being produced after the advent of printing, and which, perhaps more importantly, supplied ways of thinking about the books issued from the press, to their proper place in a history of the early printed English book.

Print Culture and the Medieval Author leaves many scholarly questions unanswered—I attend only occasionally to the effects of printing on the orthography and language of Chaucer and Lydgate's texts, and I notice but do not discuss the Scottish editions of their writing, for instance.⁷² But this study does endeavour to fill other scholarly gaps. It is the first comprehensive survey of the earliest printing of Chaucer's works; the first discussion to deal in detail with the early printing of Lydgate's texts.⁷³ It also crosses the artificial limit set for the history of the book by the study of incunables. For these reasons I deemed it appropriate to arrange the discussion chronologically as well as thematically. In the first two chapters of the book, I discuss but also dislodge Caxton from the place he often occupies as the beginning and end of anything interesting that might be said about Middle English texts in print. I emphasize the importance of the dispersed, flexible, and changeful manuscript tradition that had long been a part of English culture to Caxton's practice in Chapter 1. Scribes, as well as the printers who followed them, opened up a bibliographical space for the articulation of

⁷² On the former, see Horobin, *The Language of the Chaucer Tradition*, ch. 5.

⁷³ For brief accounts, see Beesemyer and Dane, 'The Denigration of John Lydgate', and Simpson, *Reform and Cultural Revolution*, 40. The latter misses information in *STC*: the Redman *Stans Puer ad Mensam* edition (*STC* 17030.9) was printed 1534–6? not 'before 1540' and the Mychell *Churl and the Bird* edition (*STC* 17013) was printed 1534? not '1550'. His argument that 'from the 1530s to the 1550s the Lydgate industry continued to flourish' is therefore problematic: there was a striking lacuna in publication of his ascribed and anonymous works after the beginning of the reformation. See Gillespie, 'The Lydgate Canon in Print from 1476 to 1534', and Ch. 5.

ideas about Chaucer and Lydgate's authorship, and their work is worthy of much more sustained attention than it has received until now (or can be afforded in this study). In Chapter 2, conversely, the concern is the *difference* that print makes—the effects of mechanization, of a growing international trade, and of the gradual reorganization of book production by those who succeeded Caxton. There was, I suggest, a case to be made for print, and producers like Wynkyn de Worde and Richard Pynson found it useful to enlist authors, as they had been enlisted in the past, to give a new kind of book what they call 'good vtterauunce'.

In Chapter 3, the literary utterances with which I am concerned are Chaucer's, or at least linked to his name. On the one hand, I argue that in the decades immediately prior to the English reformation, Chaucer was implicated in processes whereby more and more texts were subsumed under the sign of his authorship, processes whose culmination was the famous edition of his *Workes* printed in 1532. On the other hand, Chaucer is a guide to the destabilizing as well as centralizing forces of print—to the promiscuity as well as fixity of printed texts. Chapter 4 describes the wanton text as especially problematic when political and religious meaning is involved. Lydgate is central to my understanding of the new role that both manuscript and printed books had respecting royal authority, concepts of nobility, orthodox piety, and the risk of transgression in the decades immediately prior to the English reformation. I end with the reformation itself in Chapter 5—or rather with the successive reformations of English religion that followed Henry VIII's break with Rome. On the one hand, I concur with the scholarly view that medieval traditions were narrowed, suppressed, and radically realigned by the ideologies of reform, and that the association of Chaucer with anti-papal propaganda and the devaluing of Lydgate's writing were a part of this process. On the other hand I suggest that the medieval author might allow us to chart the unstable relationship between publication and authority and between official policy and its reversal in the midst of a chaotic moment in English history. The texts by Chaucer and Lydgate that were printed, copied, read, ascribed, and in this sense constrained or defined during this period have one last point to make: fiction always escapes the bounds that we set for it.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

In what follows it may not always be clear what constitutes a text by or ascribed to Lydgate or Chaucer, or, indeed, what I mean by a 'book'. For Chaucer, I rely on the canon (and titles) established by *The Riverside Chaucer* (from which I take all quotations unless otherwise stated), but I include apocryphal works listed in Eleanor Prescott Hammond's *Chaucer: A Bibliographical Manual* in cases where a link to Chaucer was established prior to 1557. For Lydgate, I use the list compiled by Henry Noble MacCracken in 'The Lydgate Canon' and Alain Renoir and C. David Benson's derivative but updated chapter, 'XVI: John Lydgate', in *The Manual of the Writings in Middle English*. Again, I am interested in those texts printed before 1557 where, by 1557, some link to Lydgate had been established. I quote texts from modern editions where possible, and take titles from these editions or from Renoir and Benson. Unless otherwise stated, paratextual material for early printed editions is cited from a copy of that edition.

In my use of terms and my dates for early printed editions, reprints, and variants, I rely on *STC* except when I state otherwise: *STC* numbers are given the first time that an edition is described in detail. There is a separate list and index to editions containing texts ascribed to Chaucer or Lydgate: *IMEV* numbers and titles for each text found in these editions are given in footnotes the first time the edition is described.⁷⁴

STC editions are not the only 'books' described in this study. Much of the work here is copy-specific and I describe a number of *Sammelbände* (tract volumes) in which printed books circulated in the period. Some discussion of the difficulty of identifying these volumes is found in Paul Needham's *Printer and the Pardoner* which may be supplemented by my article, 'Poets, Printers and Early English *Sammelbände*'.

Finally, in this study, the term 'printer' and the names of the 'printers' who ran businesses in the first 100 years of the operation of the press in England are used as a shorthand for much more complex processes and relationships. The agency for decisions about

⁷⁴ Julia Boffey and A. S. G. Edwards' revision of *IMEV* was not available when this study was completed.

format and textual content that I ascribe to 'De Worde' or 'Grafton' should be understood as collaborative (involving other publishers, other printers, correctors, compositors, foremen, apprentices); the ascriptions are merely convenient. It should also be noted that a 'printer' in the early Tudor period might, at various times, commission work from another printer (publish); bind or employ a binder; wholesale and retail parts of an edition; or print books for someone else.⁷⁵

⁷⁵ See Blayney, *The Stationers' Company before the Charter, 1403–1557*, 35–7.

1

Caxton and Fifteenth-Century English Books

The 1473–4 *Recuyell of the historyes of Troye* is the first recorded translation by William Caxton of a text into English. It was also the first book printed in English, issued from presses in Bruges where the mercer was then resident. And it is the first printed book to say something about an English vernacular author: Caxton names Lydgate as an important model for his own literary endeavours as he embeds the three books of his translation within a very detailed account of those endeavours:¹

[A]s moche as that worship[p]full and religyous man dan John Lidgate, monke of Burye, dide translate hit ... I fere to take upon me, that am not worthy to bere his penner and ynkehorne after hym, to medle me in that werke. (Epilogue to Book II. 16–22)

Caxton meddles, despite his misgivings, at the behest of his patron, Margaret of Burgundy, sister of Edward IV:²

I am bounde to ... my sayd ladyes good grace and ... [as] I have now good leyzer beyng in Coleyn and have none other thyng to doo at this tyme, in eschewyng of ydlenes, moder of all vices, I have delibered in myself for the contemplacion of my sayd redoubtid lady to take this laboure in hand by the suffrance and helpe of Almyghty God. (Epilogue to Book II. 22–33)

Once his work is done he finds that ‘in the wrytyng of the same my pen is worn, myn hande wery and not stedfast, myn eyen dimmed with overmoche loking on the whit paper’. For this reason, and

¹ STC 15375; text cited from Blakes's edition, *Caxton's Own Prose*, History of Troy. On Caxton's work in Bruges, see Blake, *Caxton and His World*, ch. 3, and Painter, *William Caxton*, 59–81. Date from Needham, *The Printer and the Pardoner*.

² On Margaret as ‘bibliophile’ and patroness, see Weightman, *Margaret of York, Duchess of Burgundy, 1446–1503*, ch. 7.

because I have promysid to dyverce gentilmen and to my frendes ... I have practysed and lerned at my grete charge and dispense to ordeyne this said book in prynte after the maner and forme as ye may here see; and is not wretton with penne and ynke as other bokes ben to the'ende that every man may have them attones. (Epilogue, 3–6, 8)

Caxton's 'laboure' is described in the context of a set of social relations—a gift economy in which the writer is supplicant, 'bounde' or seeking bondage within a system of noble patronage and reward;³ networks of fellowship and fraternity in which the desire of 'gentilmen' is met by the printer who can then identify them as 'frendes';⁴ a culture of Christian devotion that sets good works against 'vices' and labour against idleness;⁵ and finally a money economy, in which Caxton has 'grete charge and dispense' to make some books.⁶ However, the networks to which Caxton refers are literary and bibliographical as well as social. The work in which Caxton says he meddles is, precisely, a literary text: Lydgate's *Troy Book*. The 'laboure in hand' is translation but also copying and then the work of 'prynte', a word found within an established vernacular tradition with a range of meanings—to impress upon a surface; to coin; to engrave or write; to fix in one's memory; to fix. Chaucer, for instance, makes Criseyde a kind of surface for printed impressions: 'But every word which that she of hire herde, | She gan to prenten in hire herte faste' (*Troilus*, II. 899–900).⁷ Caxton was impressionable too. He made use of Burgundian and other continental examples in his choice and arrangement of his Bruges and his Westminster texts: the *Recuyell* is, he says, translated after 'Raoul Lefevre, whiche was auctor of this present book in the Frensh tonge', a chaplain to the Burgundian prince and bibliophile Phillip the Good (Prologue, 66–7).⁸ But when he comes to describe his own book of Troy, the English vernacular book and English vernacular traditions provide Caxton with his most important exemplars.

³ Caxton claims to be Margaret's servant and to collect from her a 'yerly fee' (Prologue, 52); see Painter, *William Caxton*, 44–5. Zemon Davis, *The Gift in Sixteenth-Century France*, is a useful introduction to contemporary gift economies.

⁴ On the Ciceronian tradition of *amicitia*, see Hutson, *The Usurer's Daughter*, 52–65, and for its erotic content and importance to patronage and authorship, Stewart, *Close Readers*, 122–60.

⁵ On the traditional link between leisure, work, and artistic production, see Leclercq, 'Otium Monasticum as a Context for Artistic Production'.

⁶ On the rise of England's money economy in the late Middle Ages, see Britnell, *The Commercialisation of English Society, 1000–1500*: he describes contexts for specialization of labour, including the growth of book-related crafts, after 1400, 155–78.

⁷ MED, s.v. 'prenten'.

⁸ For Burgundian influence on Caxton, see Kipling, *The Triumph of Honour*, 33–6.

Caxton thus invites the reader in his version of the Troy story to consider the relationship between his book and Lydgate's *Troy Book*, and to go beyond familiar observations that printed editions looked like manuscripts, that manuscripts served as his exemplars, or that writers like Lydgate provided him with some of his vocabulary of praise and indebtedness.⁹ In the following chapter I take up this invitation. I describe books made in late fourteenth- and fifteenth-century England before the advent of printing, and new levels of organization and commercialization among their producers, as precedents for Caxton's work between 1473–4 and 1476, the first year of his operation in England. I suggest that the medieval author was a way to limit, mediate, and profit from the movement in vernacular books before Caxton arrived on the publishing scene. However, in the following account, late medieval English manuscripts are not merely precedents for printers' wares, or evidence of a teleological progression from a chaotic Middle Age for books to a commercialized, authorized, early modern one. They are full of evidence that making and distributing medieval manuscripts—mostly still the products of a bespoke trade—was a process different from, but no less dynamic than, the production of books in print. Caxton had to meddle in *that* work, an established culture of book production, as well as in the work done by authors and the new work of the press.

AUTHORS AND THE MAKING OF BOOKS OF TROY

Long before Caxton took up a 'penner', Chaucer made a book of Troy and penned some lines about its transmission, 'Chaucers Wordes unto Adam, His Owne Scriveyn':

Adam scriveyn, if ever it thee bifalle
 Boece or Troylus for to wryten newe,
 Under thy long lokkes thou most have the scalle,
 But after my making thow wryte trewe;
 So ofte adaye I mot thy werk renewe.

(ll. 1–5)

⁹ See Smith, 'The Design Relationship between the Manuscript and the Incunable', for instructive comment on simplistic accounts of the shift from manuscript to print; Hellinga, 'Manuscripts in the Hands of Printers', for Caxton's scribal exemplars; and Blake, *William Caxton and Literary Culture*, 167–85, on Lydgate as a model for Caxton.

A copyist of most of the Hengwrt and all of the Ellesmere of *The Canterbury Tales* was a scribe called 'Adam', an Adam Pinkhurst who became a member of the Scriveners' Company in about 1392. Linne R. Mooney, to whom we owe this identification, locates this scribe close to Chaucer. He was part of the fractious mercantile community that the writer inhabited after his move to Aldgate in 1374 and he perhaps worked (as the title for the poem, supplied c.1430 by the scribe John Shirley, suggests) as the poet's 'owne scriveyn'.¹⁰ Chaucer's poem locates the man even closer. The author's Troy book has not gone far. It is copied, however inaccurately, after the writer's own 'makying'. Chaucer may not be able to stop Adam from scratching misreadings into the parchment before him, but he is, at least, close enough to scrape those readings off and to make a witty analogy between this task and the copyist's 'scalle'—to get right under his scrivener's skin.

How, then, are we to read the first line of Chaucer's poem? The words 'if ever it thee bifalle' press his Troy book forward to moments and happenstances just beyond his bodily or imaginative reach. They recall the concerns of the final stanzas of *Troilus* itself. The author's 'litel' book (v. 1786) might follow the high steps of the great poets of antiquity, but it might equally be rendered mis-metred gibberish by an incompetent copyist, by a scribe with a strange dialect, or by time, which always makes old texts out of those the author would wish to keep new. These seem intimate moments: the writer describes his literary ambition, gives a name to his fears and even to his scribe, evokes for us the physical work of writing and correcting. But they are, paradoxically, also moments when the author imagines the considerable distance between his books and his making of them.

This may provide a useful way to think about the new English literary culture associated with Chaucer, his contemporaries, and their fifteenth-century followers. The writers belonging to this tradition are newly articulate about their work. They name themselves playfully or cautiously, but they do so with far more frequency than the English writers of earlier generations.¹¹ They also do so in contexts in which new

¹⁰ Mooney, 'Chaucer's Scribe'. Shirley copied the poem in Camb. Trinity R. 3. 20, in the 1430s, probably while still in the retinue of Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick (see Connolly, *John Shirley*, ch. 1 and Table 2; Mooney, 'John Shirley's Heirs', 186). See Lerer, *Chaucer and His Readers*, ch. 4.

¹¹ English examples are likened to continental ones in De Looze, *Pseudo-Autobiography in the Fourteenth Century*.

things 'bifalle' English vernacular texts. Chaucer's associate John Gower directs his *Confessio Amantis* to two different patrons, Richard II and his rival Henry IV, then earl of Richmond, in different versions of the prologue to that poem.¹² He pushes the point further: the whole nation might enjoy a text written 'for Engelondes sake', and any prospective patron may identify and think favourably of its author, 'John Gower'.¹³ Patronage sustained writers and produced self-promoting paratextual additions to texts in England before the Ricardian period: Wace refers to the rents of the patrons upon whom his own work depends; another Anglo-Norman poet, Benedeit, wrote his life of St Brendan for one of the wives of Henry I; Jean Froissart came to the court of Edward III in hope of reward for his literary skills.¹⁴ However, Gower's dual dedication signals something new: the self-confidence—the public voice and, increasingly, the public name—of writers working in the English vernacular from the second half of the fourteenth century forward.¹⁵

The book to which Caxton directs us in his *Recuyell*, Lydgate's *Troy Book*, is professedly a part of this new, vernacular, English literary culture. Like Caxton's own text, Lydgate's is translated for a royal patron, Henry V, who

gaf me in commaundement,
Nat ȝore a-go, in his faderes tyme,
þe sege of Troye on my maner to ryme,
Moste for his sake, to speke in special.
Al-þouȝ þat I be boistous and rual,
He gaf me charge þis story to translate.

The command to 'ryme' proves irresistible: the author, a monk of Bury, is 'called Iohn Lydgate' in the next line (v. 3462–8). His commission is undertaken 'moste' for Henry's sake but also, as was Gower's text, for the nation at large. Henry V

wolde that to hyȝe and lowe
The noble story openly wer knowe
In oure tonge, aboute in euery age,

¹² Mahoney, 'Gower's Two Prologues to *Confessio Amantis*'.

¹³ *The English Works of John Gower, Confessio Amantis*, Prologue, 24 and vii. 2321.

¹⁴ See Lucas, 'The Growth and Development of English Literary Patronage in the Later Middle Ages and Early Renaissance', and Rutter, 'William Caxton and Literary Patronage'.

¹⁵ See Middleton, 'The Idea of Public Poetry in the Reign of Richard II'.

And y-writen as wel in oure langage
As in latyn and in frensshe it is.

(Prologue, 111–15)

An author, as well as a self-aggrandizing and belligerently English monarch, might capitalize on the progress of the vernacular text across time ('euery age') and space ('openly').¹⁶ He might attract temporal as well as spiritual reward for his writings both political and religious—as Lydgate did, obtaining commissions from abbots and princes, noble and gentlewomen, mercers and goldsmiths.¹⁷ An analogy may be drawn with Caxton's *Troy book* here. Caxton's carefully presented *Recuyell* with its detailed account of Margaret of Burgundy's patronage may have attracted the attention of Elizabeth Woodville, wife of Edward IV, and sometime patron (solicited or real) of Caxton's press. She was the likely owner of the only surviving copy of the 1473–4 *Recuyell* that includes an engraved presentation scene depicting her kinswoman Margaret. According to a near-contemporary inscription:

This boke is mine quene elizabet late wiffe unto the moste noble king edwarde the forthe off whose bothe soolis y beseche almyghty God take to his onfynyght mercy above. Amen. Per me thomas Shukburghe iuniorem.¹⁸

Lydgate's *Troy Book* is among those fourteenth- and fifteenth-century texts that enable Caxton to imagine this moment: the profitable, reputation-enhancing circulation of vernacular writing to the great and the good.

However, the writer of the inscription on Caxton's *Recuyell*, Thomas Shukburghe, offers some other ways of thinking about a new and more 'open' movement of English texts. He was a member of the Warwickshire gentry family of that name who may have been in service at court in the late fifteenth century. It is possible that this copy of the *Recuyell* reached him through members of his family who were drapers in London and supplied Edward IV's household.¹⁹ By the time that this copy of the

¹⁶ On Henry V's nationalism and the vernacular, see Fisher, 'A Language Policy for Lancastrian England'.

¹⁷ Pearsall, *John Lydgate*, 70–3, is a useful account of his patrons.

¹⁸ The book is Huntington 62222; the inscription appears on the recto of the penultimate final flyleaf. On Elizabeth Woodville's patronage of Chaucer, see Painter, *William Caxton*, ch. 16.

¹⁹ Wang reproduces and discusses the inscription and engraving, identifies Thomas junior, 1468–99, and establishes the link to Edward IV's drapers in 'Caxton's Romances and Their Early Tudor Readers'.

Recuyell was made to record its place among the ‘hyæ’, that is, it was in the hands of someone ‘lowe’, or at least lower than Elizabeth Woodville or her kinswoman Margaret of Burgundy. It had moved away from the milieu of Caxton’s patron and—given that the inscription postdates 1492, the year of Caxton as well as Elizabeth Woodville’s death—away from Caxton’s immediate circle of gentlemen ‘frendes’ as well.

The market for books widened after the twelfth century, and especially in the late fourteenth and then fifteenth centuries. Demographic changes at the very end of the medieval period resulted in rising living standards and higher demand for specialized and luxury goods and ‘ever-cheapening methods of manufacture’—the use of parchment devalued by increasing meat consumption, a growing number of clerks, notaries, and commercial scribes available as copyists, the arrival of paper, the advent of printing—coincided with these changes. Book ownership, still largely the preserve of the aristocracy and cloistered religious in the thirteenth century, became more securely the province of other sorts of men and women: those in royal or noble service or at work within a growing royal bureaucracy like Chaucer or Hoccleve; minor gentry and wealthy merchants like Shukburge and his associates.²⁰

English books moved differently in this period, and it is this, as well as hope of reputation and reward, that prompts Lydgate’s most interesting writing on authorship. Lydgate perceives that loss as well as profit may inhere in the process of textual transmission, as Chaucer does. He worries in his *Troy Book* that readers might ‘pinche’ and ‘gruche’ his words (v. 3522). ‘Vn-to hem my boke is nat direct’, he writes (v. 3513). The book is instead directed to ‘symple folke’ who are constrained by affection for the author. They may amend it, perhaps, but they ‘hindre neuere-adel, | Of custom ay redy to seie wel’ of its author Lydgate (v. 3515–18). The author, and not any ‘wyrt’ that ‘can no skyl at al’ (v. 3499–501), is the ground of this well-saying and, for Lydgate, the author is specifically ‘Chaucer’, who is dead:

²⁰ See Meale, ‘Patrons, Buyers and Owners’ (201) and Kwakkel, ‘A New Type of Book for a New Type of Reader’. On the rise of a commercial trade in Anglo-Norman texts in manuscript, and lay owners of these books as early as the late 1200s, see Taylor, ‘Manual to Miscellany’; see Britnell, *The Commercialisation of English Society, 1000–1500*, 168, on the falling cost of hide; Barron, ‘Chivalry, Pageantry and Merchant Culture in Medieval London’, 223–4, for a useful summary of evidence of merchant-class book ownership; see Wang, ‘Caxton’s Romances and Their Early Tudor Readers’, on the middling sort of readers of Caxton’s books.

Was neuer noon to þis day alyue,

 þat worþi was his ynhorn for to holde.

However, Lydgate adds, 'if þer any be',

In borwe or toun, village or cite,
 þat konnyng haþ his trais for to swe,
 Wher he go brood or be shet in mwe—

he authorizes their literary response. They alone may 'race & skrape þrouȝ-oute al my boke, | Voide & adde wher hem semeth nede' (v. 3519–39). Having declared there is no author alive who can match Chaucer, Lydgate cancels the very danger he here appears to allow—the possibility that his text will be recomposed by scribes or readers in his absence. Only the worthy may scrape words from the parchment on which Lydgate's poem is written; the only 'worþi' is dead. The author in this way offers an end to the perilous process by which fictions are, as McKenzie suggests, 'regenerated by readers', but he does so just at the moment that he disappears. Lydgate anticipates what will 'bifalle' the author's text. It may, at first, stay close to the author's making or milieu ('shet in mwe', like Lydgate's imagined, hard-working corrector) but it will also 'go brood', extol the merits of patron or nation in each town and every age, earn a writer his reputation, but continue to do so long after this might be of some practical use. It is in this sense that there is 'noon to þis day alyue'—'noon auctor', no ascription, no dedication, no process of careful scribal supervision that does not open up, as well as limit, the possible meanings of a text. Caxton, writing after and within such nuanced ways of thinking about English authorship, is right to 'fere', to hope, to hedge his bets—now with a patron, now with his friends—as he puts his name to his book of Troy.

BOOKS OF TROY AND THE MAKING OF AUTHORS

Caxton was a book producer as well as a writer. Vernacular texts served as precedents for his authorship; vernacular English books, and the growth in their production in the decades before 1473–4, must also be considered a part of the way that he thought about his work.²¹

²¹ The growth is clear from numbers of surviving copies: Edwards and Pearsall, 'The Manuscripts of the Major English Poetic Texts', note that 'the most cursory comparison

Most, perhaps all, new English manuscripts were produced to order for customers rather than kept in stock by booksellers in the fifteenth century.²² Manuscripts were not produced speculatively as printed books were. But a new sort of 'boke' is nonetheless near at hand in Chaucer and Lydgate's account of authorship. As they use it, the word collapses the distinction between the text and the object that bears it. Lydgate's 'al my boke' includes the pages scraped by his future readers; the 'litel boke' Chaucer makes of *Troilus* encompasses not only its literary content but its existence in a variety of social and material contexts; and as the author imagines the repeated copying that might 'bifalle' *Troilus* in 'Chaucers Wordes unto Adam', he addresses a new sort of English book producer—a member of an increasingly organized, increasingly professional, and newly productive book trade. Adam Pinkhurst copied accounts and petitions for London's Mercers; he joined the ranks of the city's Scriveners; and, like a number of other trained copyists employed, probably intermittently, to make literary books, he copied texts by Chaucer that still survive: a *Boece*, a fragment of *Troilus*, and a version of *The Canterbury Tales* in addition to Hengwrt and Ellesmere.²³

For the purposes of this study it is of particular interest that, despite the evident links between Chaucer's Troy story and the new work of commercial scribes—Ralph Hanna III suggests there may even have been a clearing house of exemplars used by commercial copyists of the text—only two of the seventeen (including fragments) extant *Troilus* manuscripts are ascribed to their self-consciously bookish author.²⁴

of the seventy-five year periods on either side of 1400 reveals ... the difference between a rate of production that leaves extant about thirty [vernacular literary] manuscripts and one that leaves extant about six hundred' (257).

²² A point made by Pollard in 'The English Market for Printed Books', 10.

²³ For Pinkhurst's activities broadly, see Mooney, 'Chaucer's Scribe'; his *Boece* is Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, Peniarth 393D; his *Troilus* is Hertfordshire, Hatfield House, Cecil Papers, Box S/1 (a single leaf); his third copy of the *Tales* is CUL, Kk. 1. 3, Part 20 (a fragment). On commercial scribes at work on Chaucer manuscripts, see Doyle and Parkes, 'The Production of Copies of the *Canterbury Tales* and the *Confessio Amantis* in the Early Fifteenth Century'; more recent work includes Mooney, 'A New Scribe of Chaucer and Gower'; Mooney and Matheson, 'The Beryn Scribe and his Texts'; and Partridge, 'A Newly Identified Manuscript by the Scribe of the New College *Canterbury Tales*'.

²⁴ Hanna, *Pursuing History*, ch. 7. See also his study of a single, probably metropolitan, commercial producer of two *Troilus* manuscripts, 'The Scribe of Huntington HM 114'. The ascribed copies are Bodl. Arch. Seld. supra 56 and Rawl. poet. 163. CUL Gg. 4. 27 appears to collect Chaucer's 'works' including *Troilus* but the poet is clearly named as author of *The Parliament of Fowls* only in this book (he is identified as a teller of his own *Tales* and he is 'G.C.' when he addresses Scogan).

Bodl. Rawl. poet. 163 is one of the two copies that name the poet. The words ‘chaucer’ and ‘Tregentil’ are repeated at the end of *Troilus* and at the end of the lyric ‘To Rosemounde’ that follows it. The copyist of this manuscript found reason to describe the author of a short poem, perhaps one of uncertain origin. The gentle status of the text (or its writer) and the poet’s name link ‘To Rosemounde’ to *Troilus* and afford a slight piece a place in Chaucer’s canon. Most other copies of *Troilus* are, or recall, private, bespoke renditions of Chaucer’s text. It is worth reconsidering Chaucer’s own sense of his scribe Adam’s proximity in this respect: at an early stage, copies of *Troilus* were made by those in the poet’s own ambit, and traditions of anonymity are evidence of things which did not need to be said. In Camb. Corpus Christi 61, a famous frontispiece depicts the poet as he addresses a gathering of noble lords and ladies, but the scribe never ventures this poet’s name. Presumably the courtly audience assembled knew who the poet before them was. Presumably the patron who commissioned the frontispiece wished to identify his or herself with this proximate, knowing audience. An ascription was unnecessary to make the point.²⁵

Illustrations to Lydgate’s *Troy Book*, however, suggest that a different story about the English author and the producers of his books was possible at the end of the Middle Ages. Several manuscripts of Lydgate’s text contain a standardized cycle of miniatures; most of these depict Lydgate and Henry V in a presentation scene in the first miniature; many name Lydgate in rubric just as he names himself in the text.²⁶ We can imagine a very specific commission or even authorial supervision behind the presentation copy of Lydgate’s poem that may lie behind these manuscripts. We can envisage some of the reasons for all the fuss made over it. Lydgate was never a member of a royal retinue as his master Chaucer was. He could supplicate before his king more often in a manuscript miniature or text than he could in person.²⁷ However, copies of *The Troy Book* also suggest something that Lydgate and Chaucer imagine: the text’s passage to a wider readership—to men

²⁵ It should also be noted that the decoration of this book is usually considered incomplete: on this and its relationship to the quirks of bespoke production, see Hardman, ‘Windows into the Text’, 51–4. I consider the effects of the loss of ascriptions during transmission below.

²⁶ I follow Lawton, ‘The Illustration of Late Medieval Secular Texts, with Special Reference to Lydgate’s “Troy Book”’ for dating and descriptions of the provenance and illustration of these manuscripts.

²⁷ See Mahoney, ‘Courtly Presentation and Authorial Self-Fashioning’.

and women who were neither friends nor patrons of the writer. *Troy Book* manuscripts, and other works by Lydgate made in the context of a burgeoning trade in English books, reveal how this new set of owners valued their books, how commercial producers predicted or responded to their interests, and how the author fared during the remaking of his text.

Two illustrated manuscripts of *The Troy Book* were copied by the same scribe during Lydgate's lifetime: Bodl. Digby 232, made 1420–30, and Bodl. Rawl. C. 446, produced 1425–50.²⁸ The fifteenth-century provenance of neither copy is clear; Digby 232 bears the arms of the London Vintners (which were granted in 1442), but these were added later, in an amateur fashion, to the space left on the first leaf for an owner's coat of arms. Other manuscripts that reproduce the cycle of miniatures were owned by members of the gentry willing to pay an artisan to depict their armigerous status—BL Cotton Augustus A IV, a copy from the 1430s owned by Sir Thomas Chaworth and his second wife and bearing their arms; JRL English 1, of the mid fifteenth century, with the arms of the Carent family; and Camb. Trinity O. 5. 2, made 1440–60, with arms that can be traced to the Thwaites or Knevet families. Just one of the illustrated copies of *The Troy Book* bears the insignia of an aristocrat: BL Royal 18 D II, commissioned between 1455 and 1469 by Herbert, first earl of Pembroke.

It appears that, despite their standardized format, the work on each of these books was bespoke. The copyist of Digby 232 used a different textual exemplar when he made Rawl. C. 446;²⁹ different craftsmen illustrated all of *The Troy Book* manuscripts. The space left for a coat of arms on Digby 232 need not imply speculative production, rather a design carried over from a model and/or a commissioner's disinterest in taking on this final expense.³⁰ These books are not, that is, stock from a bookseller's shop and nor do they appear to be products of an established commercial *scriptorium* with exemplars and illuminators always ready at hand.³¹ But in their anticipation of their customers'

²⁸ Doyle and Parkes, 'The Production of Copies of the *Canterbury Tales* and the *Confessio Amantis* in the Early Fifteenth Century', 201 n. 100. Linne R. Mooney has identified further manuscripts copied by this scribe: her work on these books is forthcoming.

²⁹ *Lydgate's Troy Book*, iv. 6–13, where the editor Henry Bergen notes the proximate age of the books and the high quality of the text but does not argue for a shared exemplar.

³⁰ Hardman, 'Windows into the Text'.

³¹ For the argument against regularized work in *scriptoria* in the fifteenth century, see Doyle and Parkes, 'The Production of Copies of the *Canterbury Tales* and the *Confessio Amantis* in the Early Fifteenth Century'.

demand for certain decorative schemes, standardization of decoration, and the repeated commission of scribes (notably for the copying of the same text), they do suggest a commercial setting for book production.³² At least two *Troy Book* manuscripts without miniatures, BL Royal 18 D VI and Oxford, Exeter College, 129, were copied from the same exemplar in the mid fifteenth century.³³ Large-scale projects like *The Troy Book* apparently made it expedient for those executing commissions—perhaps supervising stationers—to try to ensure steady access to materials and labour and to reborrow, reuse, or retain the same exemplars. The artistic workshop or workshops responsible for the miniatures in each book may well have retained models for their work.³⁴ This is not quite the evidence of ‘specialization, standardization, and speculation’ in the manufacture of English manuscripts sometimes imagined by print historians, but such books are certainly evidence of Lydgate’s text and his reputation gone ‘brood’, evidence of copying and scraping done, in and after his lifetime, some distance from the scene of the royal presentation of his book, in commercial contexts.³⁵

Other copies of Lydgate’s *Troy Book* can be linked to an apparently growing commercial trade in vernacular manuscripts. The fragmentary copy in Bodl. Rawl. poet. 223 was decorated by an artisan responsible, with collaborators, for the decoration of a group of books in the 1460s, probably in London.³⁶ Another, BL Arundel 99, is also the product of that decade, probably the work of a copyist known as the *Edmund-Fremund* scribe (or perhaps two or more scribes with extremely similar styles) first identified by A. I. Doyle and now thought to have been based in Suffolk near Bury St Edmunds in the 1460s. The same scribe or scribes made four copies of the *Life of SS Edmund and Fremund*: Arundel Castle; BL Yates Thompson 47; BL Harley 4826; and Bodl. Ashmole 46; two copies of Lydgate and Benedict Burgh’s *Secrees of Old*

³² Mooney, ‘Professional Scribes?’, describes the sort of evidence that suggests commercial production helpfully.

³³ *Lydgate’s Troy Book*, iv. 48.

³⁴ Mooney and Matheson, ‘The Beryn Scribe and his Texts’, describe *Brut* and Chaucer manuscripts made by affiliated scribes in increasingly organized settings by the mid fifteenth century. Even in this period artisans may have worked at different sites and, given how rarely the work of two or more of the same artisans is seen in multiple books, it seems most arrangements remained temporary or *ad hoc*.

³⁵ Ford makes these claims about manuscripts in ‘Importation of Printed Books into England and Scotland’, 179.

³⁶ Now bound with a copy of *The Canterbury Tales*; see Scott, ‘A Mid-Fifteenth-Century Illuminating Shop and Its Customers’.

Philisoffres, BL Sloane 2464 and Bodl. Laud misc. 673; two of *The Fall of Princes*, BL Harley 1766 and Montréal, McGill University Libraries, 143. Bury had been a centre for book production for some time. A 'Bury style' of book illumination was established in the 1430s; it is most evident in the illustration of the original presentation copy of Lydgate's *SS Edmund and Fremund*, BL Harley 2278.³⁷ The decoration of many later Bury books suggests that the area was still home to a decorating 'shop', a group of similarly trained and perhaps collaborating artists, in the 1460s. The Arundel Castle and Yates Thompson manuscripts of *SS Edmund and Fremund*, for instance, though worked on by different artists, have an almost identical cycle of miniatures. Borders and other aspects of the decorative style of these books can be seen in several other Suffolk manuscripts of the period.³⁸

The *Edmund-Fremund* scribe has also been closely associated with a collection of short extracts and verses by Lydgate, BL Harley 2255, a manuscript of the 1460s that bears the arms of the monastery of Bury St Edmunds and the repeated inscription 'quod Lydgate' as text after text is ascribed to the poet.³⁹ The monastery must have been in a unique position to promote the monk's work, and in doing so to magnify the institution, traditionally, as a site for both learning and veneration.⁴⁰ But the work that took place around Bury, like Lydgate's elevated status as a vernacular poet, was something new as well as something traditional. It supplies evidence of organized book production: regular access to exemplars, repeated commission, consistent demand, standardized decoration. Along with copies of his *Troy Book*, the Bury

³⁷ Rogers, 'The Bury Artists of Harley 2278 and the Origins of Topographical Awareness in English Art'.

³⁸ Doyle identified the scribe in his 1967 Lyell lectures; see Scott, 'Lydgate's Lives of Saints Edmund and Fremund' (342 for the scribe's work and 346–7 for the border illuminator); the list of relevant decorated books is updated in her *Later Gothic Manuscripts*, ii. 308. Scott argues that BL Arundel 99, where the hand is similar but the script different from other *Edmund-Fremund* manuscripts, was decorated in London and shows foreign influences: see Scott (ed.), *Mirrore of the Worlde*, 43. This again suggests the sort of flexible working arrangements, or at least persistent bespoke practices, described for *Troy Book* manuscripts above.

³⁹ Reimer and Farvolden, 'Of Arms and the Manuscript', correct the claim that these arms are those of Abbot Curteys (e.g. Pearsall, *John Lydgate (1371–1449)*, 89) and strengthen the argument that BL Harley 2255 belongs in the broad *Edmund-Fremund* group. My thanks to Professor Reimer for an advance copy of the article and very helpful discussion.

⁴⁰ See Cannon, 'Monastic Productions', on the reciprocal benefits of literary production for monk-authors and their houses and on the Bury monastery and book production, see Doyle, 'Book Production by the Monastic Orders in England', 6–7.

manuscripts suggest a trade in Lydgate's texts organized around sustained custom, consistent interest in his work, and a wide range of customers—monks as well as merchants, and members of the aristocracy as well as of the minor gentry.⁴¹

The books also describe their own cultural significance. The emblazoned *Troy Book* manuscripts suggest the worth that inheres in the act of patronage itself: they signal their commissioners' wealth and connoisseurship. Expensive decorative schemes, by circular reasoning, are evidence that such books are worthy of expense and of display. Visual and textual content are relevant to such conspicuous, bibliographical consumption precisely because certain texts and certain images repeat themselves in the hands of fifteenth-century commercial book producers. The Yates Thompson copy of *SS Edmund and Fremund* has a presentation miniature that depicts the enthroned St Edmund alone. Replicated by the illuminator in the Arundel Castle and Ashmole copies, the same image accommodates the figure of a monk, perhaps the author, as well. Indeed there is room for 'a patron, an author, an abbot, or indeed any kneeling figure. Commercial acumen showed itself—as it had in other aspects of the production of these books—in realizing the efficiency of snapping figures in and out of scenes'.⁴² The same commercial acumen is evident in the treatment of Lydgate's *Troy Book* by illustrators. In the only aristocratic copy, it is Herbert, first earl of Pembroke (with his wife), who kneels before a king (see Fig. 3). The patron replaces the poet and offers the book as a sign of his own loyal service. In all the other illustrated copies of *Troy Book*—those owned by wealthy gentle and merchant-class men and women—the image in the first miniature follows the posited presentation copy and depicts the author (see Fig. 4, from the Digby 232 *Troy Book*). Lydgate becomes an 'effect' of work done to enhance and then secure the value of his book, an image of the very thing that a book producer believed, or knew, his customer would pay for. The authorial presentation miniatures in Lydgate manuscripts are, on the one hand, a result of the straightforward, commercially motivated reproduction of suitably magnificent models—in the case of *The Troy Book*, models that included visual and verbal representations of Lydgate. On the other hand they are evidence that owners like the

⁴¹ Scott, 'Lydgate's Lives of Saints Edmund and Fremund', 342 n. 31 and 346 n. 48 for early inn-dwelling and aristocratic owners.

⁴² Scott, 'Caveat Lector' (42), and 'Lydgate's Lives of Saints Edmund and Fremund' for reproduction of images of St Edmund alone and with a monk kneeling before him (figs. 2 and 1, 3).



Figure 4. Oxford, University of Oxford, Bodleian Library, Digby 232: Lydgate's *Troy Book*, fol. 2r, presentation miniature. Reproduced with the permission of The Bodleian Library, University of Oxford.

to an established fifteenth-century tradition of literary patronage and vernacular writing. The printer also anticipates the value added to a book made to speak paratextually to that tradition for the widest English market: for the likes of Thomas Shukburghe, so concerned about the status of his book as to record its royal provenance; for the minor gentry and wealthy merchants already busy in the mid fifteenth century commissioning and buying books of Troy.

But just as Lydgate's *Troy Book* makes a claim about Chaucerian authorship that closes in upon its ambitious writer, so do Lydgatean definitions of authorship close in on Caxton. He relies, as producers of illustrated copies of *The Troy Book* did, and as Chaucer does in his poem to 'Adam Scriveyn', on intimate and traditional accounts of book production: on accounts of patrons and of readers who are also 'frendes', and on representations of the bodily labour involved in producing and correcting an authorial holograph. He tries to keep his book 'in hand' and so to elide the potentially diminishing fact that the book is actually

in the hands of 'euery man', every imaginable reader, but his own hand is 'wery and not stedfast'. The printed book can be everywhere but the author cannot be, outside of his fiction, in all places 'attones'. My point in this chapter thus far has been to suggest that both the writers and book producers of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries presented the author as one answer to the question—how can one capitalize, in the broadest, cultural sense, upon vernacular texts? But this answer should not be regarded as a 'stedfast' one. The commercially produced manuscripts of Lydgate's *Life of SS Edmund and Fremund* are to be contrasted as well as compared with his *Troy Book* manuscripts. As vehicles for the author's name they have more in common with the anonymous books made of Chaucer's *Troilus*. The original presentation copy of *SS Edmund and Fremund*, BL Harley 2278, is one of the few manuscripts that survives that was certainly made in Lydgate's lifetime and in his ambit at Bury. And yet Lydgate's name is not merely missing from the text, it is nowhere present in the rubric to the text. Even the 'presentation miniature' is ambiguous. There is no indication that any of the monks with Henry VI as he is admitted to St Edmund's confraternity is Lydgate.⁴⁴ The same is true of the Arundel Castle and other *Edmund-Fremund* copies of the text. The monks who kneel before the saint or speak are never named. From 'overmoche lokyng' on the paper and parchment surfaces of such books, Caxton may well envisage contexts in which hands tremble and ideas about authors disappear.

REMEMBRANCE, GOSSIP, AND ANONYMITY

In Lydgate's *Troy Book*, value accrues to any book that is a record of the past, as writers

euery thyng I-set,
And *with* the keye of remembraunce it schet.

(Prologue, 223–4)

Texts are a key to remembrance. But 'remembraunce' is also a key, one that locks in the worth of a text. For the value of books, of a traffic in knowledge to 'euery man', as the Clerk with his shelf of twenty

⁴⁴ Rogers, 'The Bury Artists of Harley 2278 and the Origins of Topographical Awareness in English Art', 222. For a facsimile, see Edwards (ed.), *The Life of St Edmund, King & Martyr*.

tomes and his preference for ‘Aristotle’ knows well, is conferred in part by authority.⁴⁵ The authority for Caxton’s *Recuyell ... of Troye*, I have suggested, was Lydgate, whose

werkis / his laude / must nede conqueure
They may *neuer* out of remembraunce dye
His werkis shal his name conueye & bere
Aboute the worlde / almost eternely.

The book that seeks to make Lydgate famous *almost* forever, that I quote here, is *The Book of Curtesye*, a text printed in half-quarto by Caxton in 1477 on the small press that he carried with him to Westminster. Like other fifteenth-century books of manners, it reminds a recalcitrant little reader that worldly success of the sort earned by boys who serve their lord well at table does not last ‘eternely’: the ultimate reward for a life lived well is spiritual.⁴⁶

Such texts also had more worldly concerns, however, which are evident in a history of this text’s transmission. A single manuscript copy of the poem that was printed by Caxton is extant. It was produced in about 1500 from an independent source from Caxton’s edition, and as an independent manuscript ‘booklet’ (a term I define below), and survives as Oxford, Oriel College, 79. The text has been copied—perhaps by an amateur scribe, as the work is rough—alongside lists of wards and taxes for the city of London. Such lists were often appended to fifteenth-century London chronicles and commonplace books compiled or owned by members of the merchant class.⁴⁷ They address the most pressing and decidedly temporal concerns of readers: the cost of living, the property owned by one’s neighbours. That temporal, changeful world has changed the meaning of *The Book of Curtesye*. As bibliographical forms converge (the size and shape of Caxton’s edition match that of the manuscript booklet closely) so do textual variants force the witnesses apart. Oriel 79 praises Lydgate in different terms from the printed edition:

⁴⁵ On the relationship between authority and memory, see Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, ch. 6, and on writing and memory, 8–9; Lydgate’s commonplace is also Chaucerian (*Legend of Good Women*, Prologue, 25–6).

⁴⁶ STC 3303: contains IMEV 1919. Quotation from Furnivall (ed.), *Caxton’s Book of Curtesye*, ll. 392–6. See Hardman, ‘“This Litel Child, His Litel Book”’.

⁴⁷ See Gillespie, ‘John Stow’s “Owlde” Manuscripts of London Chronicles’, 63–4, and Boffey and Meale, ‘Selecting the Text’, on this practice.

But his werkys his laude moste nede conquere
 He may neuer oute of remembraunce die
 His werkys shall his *werkys* conuey and bere.

(fol. 104v, emphasis added)

A simple scribal error—the substitution of an earlier word for another in the line of verse—seems here to describe the world in which Caxton set up his press. Authors may be lauded, stamped in miniature upon their books, but in an unruly sphere for the circulation of discourse, ‘werkys’ may equally be transmitted without reference to their writer’s ‘name’.

Caxton’s *Book of Curtesye* has proven central to other scholars’ assessments of the printer’s career. Until the nineteenth century, the sole surviving copy was part of a volume in which it had been bound with a selection of other items printed by Caxton between 1476 and 1477. The volume was intact in the early sixteenth century when several pages were marked by the Tudor courtier and author George Ferrers.⁴⁸ The texts joined with *The Book of Curtesye*, the second to last item in the book, are broadly Chaucerian or Lydgatean: *Stans Puer ad Mensam* (with other poems);⁴⁹ *Paruus catho*;⁵⁰ *The Debate of the Horse, Goose, and Sheep* (with other poems);⁵¹ *The Churl and the Bird*;⁵² *The Temple of Glas*;⁵³ *The Parliament of Fowls* (with other poems);⁵⁴ and *Anelida and Arcite* (with other poems).⁵⁵ Lotte Hellinga has argued that Caxton’s small verse pamphlets (in quarto and half quarto) were designed as the component parts of such bound, vernacular miscellanies, to be encased between ‘sturdy leather-covered boards’ with ‘hand-written title

⁴⁸ See the more detailed discussion of the book, its content, provenance, and the manuscripts analogues described below in Gillespie, ‘Caxton’s Chaucer and Lydgate Quartos’.

⁴⁹ *STC* 17030: with *Stans*, *IMEV* 2233 and *IMEV* 3074; 4137; 4181 (‘Salve Regina’, ‘Who-so off Welth’, ‘Sensus Miratur’).

⁵⁰ Cato’s distichs, *STC* 4850, *IMEV* 854 and 3955; ascribed to Benedict Burgh in manuscript copies.

⁵¹ *STC* 17018 with *IMEV* 658 and minor poems *IMEV* 3504 and 3437 (‘The worlde so wyde’, ‘Tied with a Line’) and some lists of collective nouns.

⁵² *STC* 17008, *IMEV* 2784.

⁵³ *STC* 17032, *IMEV* 851.

⁵⁴ *STC* 5091, *IMEV* 3412 with Scogan’s ‘Moral balade’, *IMEV* 2264; ‘Wyth empty honde men may no hawkes lure’, *IMEV* 4187.8; and Chaucer’s ‘Truth’, ‘Fortune’, and ‘Lenvoy de Chaucer a Scogan’, *IMEV* 809; 3661; 3747.

⁵⁵ *STC* 5090: contains Chaucer’s ‘To His Purse’, *IMEV* 3787; and *IMEV* 3943; 1618; 1619 (‘Whan feyth failleth’, ‘Hit cometh by kynde of gentil blode’, ‘Hit falleth for every gentilman’).

pages'.⁵⁶ Seth Lerer argues that the Ferrers *Sammelband* 'is a testimony both to Caxton's understanding of vernacular poetry and to the tastes of his clientele. It is a volume centred on a particular publishing event, a volume that contains not only the key texts by canonical authors, but the critical instruction for their understanding: *The Book of Curteseye*'.⁵⁷ According to Hellinga and Lerer, Caxton's quartos are designed to be understood together. Caxton offers a single space for multiple texts, and the fifteenth-century author and his 'canonical' writings as a locus for their meaning.

Although I will describe the Ferrers *Sammelband* in different terms, both of these readings are valuable. They draw attention to the economics of the book trade at this time. Pamphlets, indulgences, and other ephemeral items were printed in small runs to provide ready money while printers tied up their capital in larger, more expensive books. And *Sammelbände* extended marketing opportunities—the possibility that the producer might exert control over little books by promoting them as part of larger volumes.⁵⁸ However, *The Book of Curtesye* may also be a key to a rather different understanding of Caxton's practice. He relied on established conditions for manuscript production in England, in a culture that valued remembrance but also involved the less steadfast circulation of useful, gossipy, fictional texts.

I have argued at length elsewhere that Caxton used a set of scribal 'booklets' as exemplars for his verse quartos. A manuscript booklet, as described by Pamela Robinson and Ralph Hanna III, is a 'small but structurally independent production containing a single work or a number of short works'.⁵⁹ Caxton's own word for such a book was 'pamphlet'. The latter term is used by print historians for the often polemical products of the late sixteenth- and seventeenth-century press, but it is worth relocating it in a longer story about books: Lydgate's *Churl and the Bird* was translated from 'a paunflet I radde & sauh but late'.⁶⁰ Caxton's prologue to his *Eneydos* describes the 'paunflettis' lying about in his study, awaiting printed form.⁶¹ Pamphlets or booklets—for

⁵⁶ Hellinga, 'A Note on Caxton's Edition', 17–21.

⁵⁷ Lerer, 'William Caxton', 727.

⁵⁸ See Needham, *The Printer and the Pardoner*, 28–30, and Halasz, *The Marketplace for Print*, 15 n. 3 and n. 4 on ephemera, and Gillespie, 'Poets, Printers, and Early English *Sammelbände*' on the marketing of *Sammelbände*.

⁵⁹ Robinson, 'The "Booklet"', 46; see also Hanna, *Pursuing History*, 21–34.

⁶⁰ Line 35, cited from *The Minor Poems of John Lydgate: Part II*.

⁶¹ *STC* 24796; *Caxton's Own Prose*, *Eneydos*, Prologue, 3.

convenience I will use the latter term for scribal work—and larger volumes compiled or copied from them are an important part of a story that has already been told about the fifteenth-century vernacular book in England. Julia Boffey and John J. Thompson are among those who have argued that manuscripts containing textually related groups of Chaucerian and Lydgatean minor works, in similar combinations to those of Caxton, ‘descended originally from independent groups of gatherings (booklets), each containing a single longish work, or a group of lyrics, from which anthologies of poetry could be made up or copied’.⁶² Links have been made between booklets and metropolitan commercial book production, and some deductions have followed: booklets, Andrew Taylor suggests, ‘were a part of a stationer’s regular stock’, and signal ‘the beginnings of speculative production’.⁶³

While, as will be clear below, I am sceptical about the last of these arguments, there is good reason to associate booklet-based books with organized, commercial manuscript production and then with the arrival of the press. Many of the poems printed by Caxton are found in the so-called ‘Oxford-group’ of Chaucer manuscripts: Bodl. Fairfax 16, Bodley 638, Tanner 346, and Digby 181 (Part I), and some related manuscripts: CUL Ff. 1. 6, Wiltshire, Longleat Library, 258, and Camb. Magdalene Pepys 2006. (Independent parts I and II of the latter both contain a selection of texts like Caxton’s; the poems in Part I are so close textually to those in Caxton’s editions that it seems likely the scribe worked from lost reprints or the same exemplars).⁶⁴ Fairfax 16 and Tanner 346 are both made up of a set of booklets. Fairfax 16, copied 1430–50, is in five distinct units, each of which was foliated separately in a contemporary hand: these were brought together according to an owner’s wishes after the copying process was complete.⁶⁵ It seems that Tanner was intended as a complete book from the start: booklet production enabled three collaborating scribes to work on it in overlapping stints.⁶⁶ Even those books in the group that were produced by continuous copying (Bodley,

⁶² Boffey and Thompson, ‘Anthologies and Miscellanies’, 280.

⁶³ Taylor, ‘Authors, Scribes, Patrons and Books’, 358–9; see also his interesting study of the use of booklets in a commercial trade in Latin and Anglo-Norman texts c.1250–1350 in ‘Manual to Miscellany’.

⁶⁴ This group of manuscripts was first described by Hammond, in *Chaucer*, 333–40, and ‘MS Longleat 258’, 196–8; see also Brusendorff, *The Chaucer Tradition*, 182–98, and Boffey and Thompson, ‘Anthologies and Miscellanies’, 280–3.

⁶⁵ See the ‘Introduction’ in Norton-Smith (ed.), *Bodleian Library MS Fairfax 16*.

⁶⁶ See the ‘Introduction’ in Robinson (ed.), *Manuscript Tanner 346, Bodleian Library Oxford*, pp. xix–xxii.

Digby, and Longleat) regularly assemble texts in an order that suggests a common origin in 'independent groups of gatherings'. Moreover, many of the manuscripts can be associated with paid production, and in some cases, identifiable artisans. Part I of Digby 181 was copied 1475–1500 by John Brode, a scribe who also produced JRL English 113, a copy of *The Canterbury Tales*.⁶⁷ Fairfax 16 was illuminated by William Abell (or someone from his school). Abell was a member of the London Stationers' Company from 1448 to 1474.⁶⁸ At least one of these books actually found its way to the hands of Caxton's foreman, if not Caxton himself: Bodley 638, copied between 1475 and 1500, served as the copy-text for Wynkyn de Worde's sixteenth-century editions of *The Complaint of the Black Knight*, *Ragman Roll*, and *The Parliament of Fowls*.⁶⁹

Other booklets made by commercial scribes can be linked—within an interconnected network of scribes, stationers, writers, and compositors—to Caxton's shop. The scribe and translator John Shirley stands at the beginning of a narrative that emerges from this evidence. Shirley copied and translated large numbers of vernacular texts in the 1420s and early 1430s. Some of these survive in holograph manuscript miscellanies—BL Add. 16165; the now-dismembered book once comprising London, Sion College Arc. L. 40. 2/E. 4; BL Harley 78 (fols. 80r–83v), and Camb. Trinity R. 3. 20—full of texts by Chaucer and Lydgate. During the 1420s, Shirley worked as a scribe in the Exchequer in London, in which role he may have encountered other bureaucrats who moonlighted as Chaucer scribes, Hoccleve among them. He was also, from 1403 forward, in the service of the earl of Warwick, Richard Beauchamp, whose links to Chaucer's family and whose circle's patronage of Lydgate are attested. In the 1430s, Shirley moved more permanently to London; by 1444 he was renting property at St Bartholomew's Hospital. Another of his manuscripts survives from this time, Bodl. Ashmole 59—again replete with minor verse items by Chaucer and Lydgate.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ See Seymour, *A Catalogue of Chaucer Manuscripts: Volume I*, 30–1, and Parkes, *English Cursive Book Hands, 1250–1500*, plate 3.

⁶⁸ On Abell, see Alexander, 'William Abell "Lymnour" and 15th Century English Illumination', and Christianson, *A Directory of London Stationers and Book Artisans, 1300–1500*, 59–60.

⁶⁹ These books and their contents are described in detail in Ch. 3. See Erler, 'Printers' Copy'.

⁷⁰ For Shirley's books and life the best guide is Connolly, *John Shirley*; see 23 and 27 for the records of his clerkship in London, Public Record Office, E.403/675, m. 13 and

There has been much speculation about whether Shirley's London premises served as some sort of centre for manuscript production.⁷¹ He certainly loaned his books to other readers; he asks them to return his copies to him in verse additions to his manuscripts. But the only evidence of a direct link between Shirley and professional scribes is posthumous. His books lie behind a number of late fifteenth-century London manuscripts: certainly BL Add. 34360, Harley 2251, Harley 7333, Cotton Titus A XXVI (fols. 61–207), and Houghton Eng. 530; probably BL Add. 5467.⁷² Two of these books, BL Add. 34360 and Harley 2251, are linked to Shirley via their copyist, the so-called Hammond-scribe.⁷³

If a case is to be developed from dispersed and rather inconclusive evidence—such as that found in *Troy Book* manuscripts or in the work of the *Edmund-Fremund* scribe—for organized, commercial, and even speculative production of manuscript books in England before the arrival of the press, and for the impact of this on Caxton, the Hammond-scribe must be central to it. In both Add. 34360 and Harley 2251, this scribe copied an identical sequence of texts apparently derived from the copies Shirley made in Ashmole 59; other parts of both books have direct analogues in Shirley's Harley 78 and Camb. Trinity R. 3. 20. The Hammond-scribe worked in the presence of a collaborator when making up the booklets in Camb. Trinity R. 3. 21; there, some material is duplicated from a retained exemplar, probably a booklet. The second

BL Add. 35204, m. 12. 'While at work on BL. Add. 16165 ... in the 1520s ... [Shirley] was listed as a clerk of the Exchequer, working under John Throgmorton, senior clerk, another Beauchamp retainer, while his patron, Richard Beauchamp, was away fighting in France' (Linne R. Mooney, personal correspondence with author, 25 June 2004). Mooney's work on Shirley and fellow Exchequer scribes, including Hoccleve, is forthcoming; my thanks for her assistance. On Hoccleve as clerk, see also Knapp, *The Bureaucratic Muse*.

⁷¹ Connolly summarizes the debate helpfully, *John Shirley*, 2–4, 191–5.

⁷² See Mooney, 'John Shirley's Heirs', 183, where other books with a loose relationship to Shirley's are listed. See also Connolly, *John Shirley*, 172–85, 177–8, 181–2.

⁷³ These books are English verse miscellanies. The Hammond-scribe's other books are: London, College of Physicians, 388 and BL Royal 17 D XV (fols. 167r–301r), both *Canterbury Tales*; BL Arundel 59 and BL Harley 372 (fols. 71r–112r), both Hoccleve's *Regiment of Princes*; Camb. Trinity R. 14. 52, medical works; BL Harley 4999, *Statutes of the Realm*; Camb. Trinity O. 3. 11, a collection on London city and guild rights and liberties; BL Add. 2990, heraldic texts; Worcester, Dean and Chapter, F. 172, religious material; BL Cotton Claudius A VIII (fols. 175r–97v), Fortescue's *Governance*; Camb. Trinity R. 3. 21 (fols. 34r–49v), an English verse miscellany; BL Harley 78 (fol. 3r), a fragment of *Pierce the Plowman's Creed*; Bodl. Rawl. D. 913 (fol. 43), a fragment of a prose *Merlin*. For more detail and a list of past studies, including Hammond's, see Mooney, 'A New Manuscript by the Hammond-Scribe'.

copyist of Trinity R. 3. 21 also copied parts of Camb. Trinity R. 3. 19.⁷⁴ This book provided De Worde with copy for his edition of the *c.*1494 *Assembly of the Gods* not long after Caxton's death, and in Caxton's premises.⁷⁵

Here then is evidence of repeated commissioning, repeated collaborative work, probably at the same premises, the retention of exemplars or even the speculative production of 'stock'. However, it should be noted that the Hammond-scribe's work (1460–80) post-dates the arrival of the first printed books in England. His career should perhaps be interpreted as evidence of a changing culture of book production that included printing, rather than as a series of precedents for the operation of the press. And it should also be observed of all England's commercial scribes of the fifteenth century that theirs was not a controlled or structured existence. The 'key' to understanding the fifteenth-century manuscript trade is flexibility. It involved amateur copyists as well as professionals, moonlighting bureaucrats, and translator-poets who were members of noble households where they undertook scribal chores.⁷⁶ Stationers, or other book producers and sellers (for there was not a monopoly on the trade), might retain stock at one time, and at other times move it on quickly. Their businesses were probably multiple, and their bookwork was certainly varied—they might commission work from freelance scribes, supervise copyists in the shop, retail second-hand books, or bind new ones with their own hands.⁷⁷ 'Flexibility' is the key to understanding manuscript booklets as well: 'If one adopts the view that the most basic definition of the booklet would insist upon the lack of overall planning of a codex until a late stage in production one reason for desiring such open-endedness was simply the limited availability of manuscript sources.'⁷⁸ I mean to argue that booklets were not—or not simply—the ready-made, 'stock' components of volumes whose value and meaning was predetermined by their speculatively minded producers. Rather, booklets, and the printed pamphlets that are

⁷⁴ Mooney, 'Scribes and Booklets of Trinity College, Cambridge, MSS R. 3. 19 and R. 3. 21'.

⁷⁵ The *c.*1494 *Assembly* and its contents are discussed in detail in Ch. 2; see Fletcher, 'The Textual Tradition of *The Assembly of the Gods*' for the manuscript as printer's copy.

⁷⁶ For this point see Mooney, 'Professional Scribes?', 141, and Scott, 'A Mid-Fifteenth-Century English Illuminating Shop and Its Customers', 194–6.

⁷⁷ Flexible working practice was typical, despite increasing specialization and guild affiliation, for all craftsmen and women in this period: see Britnell, *The Commercialisation of English Society, 1000–1500*, 155–78.

⁷⁸ Hanna, *Pursuing History*, 31, for this link between booklets and 'exemplar poverty'.

their analogues, were an expedient way of making books when access to exemplars was uncertain and likely to be temporary or disrupted, in the midst of a trade whose practices, and for customers whose interests, were anything but predictable.

Oriel 79's copy of *The Book of Curtesye* is the 'key' to this interpretation of Caxton's early quarto pamphlets of Chaucerian and Lydgatean verse. The booklet is one of just a few that survive which seem to have circulated entirely independently.⁷⁹ It is evidence of the exchange of books and texts within a culture that depended on adaptability rather than adherence to prescribed ideas. The lists of taxes and wards and other 'commonplace' material alongside *The Book of Curtesye* may suggest the collection of material for personal use from a variety of oral and written sources, over an extended period of time. The word 'gossip' has been used by Hanna as a model for the transmission of medieval texts in this way; it neatly describes the importance of loose networks for supplying information about texts, and of personal relationships that might make exemplars temporarily available.⁸⁰ Presumably some of the recipients of texts exchanged in these contexts made copies for themselves—as did a grocer, Richard Hill, in his miscellany, Oxford, Balliol College, 354.⁸¹ Some may have made copies for profit. A 'gossib'—as Caxton explains in the prologue to his edition of *Boece* of 1478—might supply a professional maker of books as well as a friend with an exemplar.⁸² Even 'commonplace' material of the sort exemplified by the lists in Oriel 79 was sometimes transcribed by professionals into books, on commission or speculatively, for sale to merchant-class readers.⁸³ The best way to account for textual variation between most booklets of verse made in

⁷⁹ I comment further on independent booklets in 'Caxton's Chaucer and Lydgate Quartos', 21, with particular references to Burgh's translation of Cato's distichs and Caxton's edition of this text: A. I. Doyle kindly directed me to his article 'Stephen Dodesham of Witham and Sheen' and to Smith, 'A Fifteenth-Century Vernacular Manuscript Reconstructed', where two of the Cato manuscript booklets I describe, Glasgow, University of Glasgow, Hunterian Library, U. 4. 17 (259) and Bodl. Rawl. poet. 35, are discussed as part of larger codices. To the original contents of the latter, he tells me, BL Sloane 3489 can be added.

⁸⁰ *Pursing History*, 8.

⁸¹ See Gillespie, 'Balliol 354', and Collier, 'Richard Hill—A London Compiler', and 'Late-Fifteenth and Early-Sixteenth-Century Manuscript Miscellanies'. My thanks to Dr Collier for kind permission to consult and cite her unpublished work.

⁸² This edition and its contents are described in Ch. 2. See *Caxton's Own Prose*, Boethius: the book was printed 'atte requeste of a singuler frende and gossib of myne' (Epilogue, 35–6).

⁸³ See Boffey and Meale, 'Selecting the Text', 149.

the same locale and same moment—like Oriel 79 and Caxton's *Book of Curtesye*—is to imagine the rapid passage of exemplars among all kinds of professional and untrained copyists. Conditions of 'exemplar poverty' did not encourage regularization of practice: scribes tended to make single copies of texts before passing them back, as Shirley hoped they might:

An þe wryter for his distresse
Whiche besechiþe youre gentylesse
þat ye sende þis boke ageyne
Hooome to Shirley þat is right feyne.⁸⁴

The *regular* retention of stock, including stock exemplars, had to wait for a time when copies were more widely available and methods of vernacular book production were more predictable, as they were in the *pecia* system of scholastic book production in Parisian universities or in monastic *scriptoria* or, finally, in more established and large-scale print-publishing operations than Caxton's was in 1476.⁸⁵

Caxton tells us he obtained copy from a 'gossib' and loose but intimate networks for exchange of copy rather than highly organized ones are a useful way to think about his work. He had no fixed plan for the items that came off his small press in that first year; there exists no singular articulation of that 'canonicity' that might unlock the meaning of these books. His customers did all sorts of different things with his pamphlets. His first editions of *The Horse, Goose, and Sheep* and *The Churl and the Bird*, now in Pierpont Morgan Library, were preserved until 1816 in York Minister with seven Latin, continental prints, for instance.⁸⁶ Copies of *Stans Puer ad Mensam* and *Paruus catho* now in the Huntington Library were preserved in the Harleian Library of the earls of

⁸⁴ In BL Add. 16165, 'þe prologe of the kalundare of þis litell booke', ll. 95–8; Connolly, *John Shirley*, Appendix 3.

⁸⁵ See Rouse and Rouse, *Authentic Witnesses*, 449–66; Pollard, 'The Pecia System in the Medieval Universities'.

⁸⁶ *The Horse, Goose, and Sheep* is the edition of 1476, STC 17019. The *Churl* is STC 17009. The Caxton books are New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, ChL 1764 and ChL 1765. The *Sammelband* also contained Pseudo-Seneca, *De remediis fortunae*, c.1474–5; Liporita, *Formula exordiorum*, 1476–7; Vergerius, *De ingenuis moribus*, c.1476–7; Florius, *De amore Camilli et Aemiliae*, 1473; Pius II, *De miseria curialium*, c.1475; Innocent IV, *Tractatus exceptionum*, c.1475–7; Peter of Blois, *De amicitia Christianorum*, c. 1473–4. See Needham, *Printer and the Pardoner*, Appendix B, no. 1, and Gillespie, 'Caxton's Chaucer and Lydgate Quartos' (I here correct some transcription errors in my original published list).

Oxford together in a vellum binding as a flimsy, apparently independent pamphlet of verse.⁸⁷ A copy of the first edition of *The Horse, Goose, and Sheep* survived either independently in stock or bound in another volume, until some time after 1550 when it became part of a *Sammelband* with twelve other printed vernacular texts.⁸⁸ The little books that Caxton printed 1476–7 belonged to a world in which producers made books in pieces and let others worry about the links between them later. Caxton's books remember and belong to a context in which the next exemplar might be by anyone or about anything, or it might fail to arrive at all.

The medieval author proves—likewise—an unsteady sort of category by which to order texts. Chaucer's name appears in Caxton's early editions (which are unsigned): in the title of 'To His Purse' in *Anelida* ('The compleint of chaucer vnto his empty purse'); in 'Lenuoy de Chaucer a Scogan', entitled 'Thenuoye of Chaucer to Skegan' in *The Parliament of Fowls*; and in 'Truth', which is entitled 'The good counceyl of chawcer' in *The Parliament of Fowls*, the wording close to the French in Bodl. Fairfax 16 ('Le bonne counseill de G. Chaucer', fol. 40r). Embedded within Scogan's own 'Moral Balade' in *The Parliament of Fowls* is customary praise and 'remembraunce' of Chaucer and an attributed version of Chaucer's 'Gentilesse'. Caxton's heading for the poem is 'a tretyse/whiche Iohn Skogan Sente vnto the lordes and gentil men of the kynges hows/exhortyng them to lose no tyme in theyr yougthe/but to vse vertues'. In Bodl. Ashmole 59, Shirley supplies a similar heading for the text for readers who might not know, but might think it important, that this poem was made for 'my lord þe Prince,

⁸⁷ Huntington 62364 and 62365; *Paruus catho* is the first edition of 1476, STC 4851. A Harleian hand describes these separate pieces in a flyleaf as a single work of '37 leaves' and De Ricci, *A Census of Caxtons*, 80, describes the Harleian catalogue record of an 'original' vellum wrapper. See further *Printer and the Pardoner*, Appendix B, no. 2; Gillespie, 'Caxton's Chaucer and Lydgate Quartos'.

⁸⁸ *The Horse, Sheep and Goose* is the first edition of 1476, STC 17019, CUL Inc. 5. J. 1. 1 (3489). The *Sammelband* also contained, before disbinding, *The dyctes*, 1528 (STC 6830); *The boke of good maners*, 1507 (STC 15398); *Lytell shorte cronycle* with Lydgate's *Verses on the Kings of England*, 1530, rebound as two items (STC 9983.7); Hawes, *A joyfull medytacyon to all Englonde*, 1509 (STC 12953); *The fantasy of the passyon of y^e fox*, 1530 (STC 10685); *The booke of hunting*, 1530? (STC 3313.3); Bush, *The extripation of ignorancy*, 1526? (STC 4186); Lydgate, *The Testament*, 1520? (STC 17035, described in more detail in Ch. 4); Copland, *Secreta Secretorum*, 1528 (STC 770); Heywood, *The play of the wether*, 1544? (STC 13305.5); Hogard, *A new treatise in maner of a dialogue*, 1550? (STC 13560); and an *Assize of Bread*, 1546? (STC 867). On this book see Lerer, 'Medieval Literature and Early Modern Readers', who politely corrects a misidentified item in my 'Caxton's Chaucer and Lydgate Quartos'.

to my lord of Clarence, to my lord of Bedford and to me lorde of Gloucestre by Henry Scogan at a souper of feorpe merchande in þe vyntre in london at the hous of Lowys Iohan' (fol. 25r).⁸⁹

However, both the Caxton and Shirley headings for Scogan's 'Moral Balade' are still rather 'gossipy'.⁹⁰ The value of Scogan's text as 'remembraunce'—a record of a world in which poets are minor court functionaries and advisers to princes, their ambitions held in check by the limits of aristocratic patronage—is a memory conferred upon a book by a copyist working in a very different world.⁹¹ In fifteenth-century England, access to texts like these and to information about them was intermittent and sketchy. The author's place is not fixed; like Scogan's first name ('Henry' or perhaps 'Iohn') it is liable to change. Of all the 'werkys' that Caxton printed in 1476–7 that a modern editor might include in Lydgate's canon, only *Stans Puer ad Mensam* is ascribed—internally, by the poet. *The Temple of Glas, Horse, Goose, and Sheep*, and *Churl and the Bird*—their *mise-en-page* remarkably close to the copies to be found in manuscripts—are just 'werkys'.⁹² Chaucer's *Parliament*, *Anelida*, and 'Truth' are likewise unasccribed. And the author is named in neither Oriel 79 nor Caxton's version of *The Book of Curtesye*. Only a few scribes wrote Lydgate next to their version of the *Dietary* that Caxton appended to his *Gouernayle of helthe* of 1490? (his only other quarto-sized edition of verse by Chaucer or Lydgate).⁹³ Caxton does not impress Lydgate's name on the book at all. The author proves an unstable part of written tradition, despite medieval claims for the memorial power of writing. But then, fiction and therefore authors may properly belong to a changeful world, as does gossip, and as do printed pamphlets, manuscript booklets, and the substantial volumes sometimes assembled from them. 'Open-endedness' is as important to an interpretation of the fifteenth-century book trade as authors or any other key to our remembrance of it.

⁸⁹ See Burnley, 'Scogan, Shirley's Reputation and Chaucerian Occasional Verse'.

⁹⁰ A comment frequently made about Shirley's rubric and used to identify it, e.g. Connolly, *John Shirley*, 170.

⁹¹ See Edwards, 'John Shirley and the Emulation of Courtly Culture'.

⁹² For instance, scribal *mise-en-page* for *The Temple of Glas* in Bodl. Bodley 638, fol. 16v—the heading placed above the bounded text space, a two-line gap left and later filled by a capital—is replicated precisely on the first printed page of the Caxton edition of the text.

⁹³ *STC* 12138: containing the prose *Gouernayle* and *Dietary*, *IMEV* 824. Lydgate is named in Bodl. Bodley 686 and Laud 683 and BL Harley 116.

THE CANTERBURY TALES, c.1476

At this point, my argument has reached two different conclusions. On the one hand, I have suggested that Caxton found the medieval author 'preclared', already written and sometimes writ or pictured large, in the texts and paratexts contained by fifteenth-century vernacular manuscripts. In certain copies of his *Troy Book*, and thus in copies of Caxton's *Recuyell ... of Troye*, 'Lydgate' proposes a value for a text copied at some distance from a royal patron and a supplicant writer—a value suggested, albeit in evasive ways, by the writer himself. On the other hand, the vernacular author has disappeared, into a book trade I describe as open-ended, amid a surfeit of mechanically and manually produced books, in the hands of all sorts of copyists, artisans, and readers who did not always take the time or find a way to name the medieval author.

Caxton's first edition of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* points in both of these directions.⁹⁴ Considerable scholarly energy has been expended in order to prove that *The Canterbury Tales* was the first major vernacular work to come off Caxton's press in Westminster. It is a finding that dovetails nicely with discussions of Chaucer's deserved place as the 'father of English literature'.⁹⁵ The last time a copy of the c.1476 edition of the *Tales* came up for sale it fetched a price well in excess of that for any other book ever sold.⁹⁶ A lot is apparently at stake in a book's history and authors are an important part of the symbolic worth upon which profit margins depend.

However, in 1476, the worth of the *Tales* was not expressed in quite these terms. There is no paratextual praise for the coming of the printed book to England as there is in the *Recuyell*. Caxton does not describe himself or his work at any point. He makes aspects of textual presentation—questions of value—a matter of choice. Like scribal copies, the c.1476 *Tales* awaited a rubricator's flourish, the work of a limner, and a binder's attention. Silver, red, and blue Lombardic initials were sometimes supplied, perhaps, given the consistency of their

⁹⁴ STC 5082, IMEV 4019.

⁹⁵ See the typographical analysis in Hellinga, *Caxton in Focus*, 54–83 (some of Caxton's quarto-sized editions of poems were printed before the *Tales*) and Cooper, 'Welcome to the House of Fame'.

⁹⁶ Sotheby's July 1998: the sale price was US\$7,565,396 to the Getty Museum, a record at the time.

form, by someone in or very near to Caxton's shop.⁹⁷ In the Merton copy of the c.1476 edition, an artist added decorative borders and a shield containing the arms of the London Company of Haberdashers: a member was apparently an early owner.⁹⁸ However, no limner or artist working to instructions from Caxton or any early user of the book added any information about the author.

In his first appearance in print, Chaucer, father of English literature, is thus a name buried, following manuscript tradition, in the ambiguous text of *The Man of Law's Prologue*; in the incipit to *The Tale of Melibee*, 'Sequitur Chawcers tale'; and in the space between *The Parson's Tale* and the Retraction:

Explicit Tractatus Galfrydi Chaucer de Penitencia vt dicitur pro fabula Rectoris
[Here ends the treatise of Geoffrey Chaucer on Penitence, spoken as the tale of the Parson].⁹⁹

Míceál F. Vaughan's meticulous work on the scribal tradition behind the last two texts of the *Tales* provides some explanation of this rather curious ending to the c.1476 edition. Caxton's explicit to *The Parson's Tale* is common to the *b*-group of *Tales* manuscripts.¹⁰⁰ It is quite different from the version left by Adam Pinkhurst in the Ellesmere manuscript: 'Heere taketh the makere of this book his leue' (fol. 232v). It varies from the French heading that marks the break between the texts in BL Harley 7334, 'Preces de Chauceres [Chaucer's Prayer]'; the simple line break in Oxford, Trinity College, Arch. 49; the Latin paratext in BL Lansdowne 851, 'Explicit ffabula Rectoris' (fol. 254v) and 'Composito [sic] huius libri hic capit licenciam suam' (fol. 255r) (a close translation of the English in Ellesmere); and from the tradition by which there is no break between *The Parson's Tale* and the Retraction at all: Glasgow, University of Glasgow, Hunterian Library, U. 1. 1 (197); and Bodl.

⁹⁷ See Edwards, 'Decorated Caxtons', 493–4 and n. 4, and the individual copy-descriptions in Solopova (ed.), Chaucer: *The General Prologue on CD-Rom*.

⁹⁸ Oxford, Merton College, 111 c. 9; for an image, see Edwards, 'Decorated Caxtons', plate 3.

⁹⁹ The book is unsigned and various copies have been foliated inconsistently; this is the explicit on the recto of the final leaf.

¹⁰⁰ The *b*-group comprises Caxton's edition; Oxford, New College, D. 314; Princeton University Library, 100; and Camb. Trinity R. 3. 15. On manuscript groups see Owen, *The Manuscripts of the Canterbury Tales*; for reassessment of this group, see Boyd, 'The Infamous b-text of *The Canterbury Tales*'.

Bodley 414 and Hatton donat. 1.¹⁰¹ The effect of this last way of making Chaucer's book may be likened to the self-abnegating strategies of Lydgate's *Siege of Thebes* as I described these in my introduction. Without a break between The Parson's Tale and Retraction, the fictional framework of the Canterbury pilgrimage yields to penitence and prayer; Chaucer's voice merges with that of his most prosaic and pious speaker. Vaughan's explanation for so varied a textual tradition is persuasive. In at least one early, probably authorial version, he argues, the Retraction was simply of a piece with the Parson's treatise on penitence. If Vaughan is right, then Pinkhurst's version represents either an authorial revision or the scribe or his director's sense of what was fitting. In Ellesmere, Chaucer's elaborate fictions of authorship are secure; the difference between impersonated and unimpersonated artistry—between Chaucer and his Parson—is clear. Caxton's derivative, *b*-group ending, by comparison, fictionalizes even as it fixes the idea of authorial discourse. The text *is* Chaucer's, but it is spoken *as* the Parson's.

The proximity of Caxton's *Tales* to a richly varied manuscript tradition suggests some of the concerns of the present chapter. A large number of manuscripts of *The Canterbury Tales* contain the hand of a scribe or group of scribes who worked on other English books—scribes who appear, that is, to have been commercially active.¹⁰² The *b*-group New College *Canterbury Tales* is one such book: the scribe also copied Bodl. Dugdale 45, a manuscript of Hoccleve's *Regiment of Princes*.¹⁰³ The explicit to The Parson's Tale in this manuscript is not just related, but identical to that found in Caxton, and parts of the book were written on paper from stocks used in Caxton's shop in 1476. Other professionally made manuscripts from the 1470s share paper with Caxton's 1476 *Tales* and with further editions issued from his press. Sections of one of these books, Camb. Trinity R. 3. 15, were either copied from the 1476 Caxton edition or from a shared exemplar.¹⁰⁴ Such evidence blurs the distinction between manuscript and 'print culture'; Caxton acquired materials from the same sources as established book producers; used copy

¹⁰¹ Transcriptions of paratext linked to The Parson's Tale and Retraction can be found in the Appendix to Vaughan's article, 'Creating Comfortable Boundaries'.

¹⁰² For relevant studies, see n. 23 above.

¹⁰³ Partridge, 'A Newly Identified Manuscript by the Scribe of the New College *Canterbury Tales*'.

¹⁰⁴ Mosser, 'The Use of Caxton Texts and Paper Stocks in Manuscripts of the *Canterbury Tales*'.

text made by, or supplied copy text to, scribes working in London in the 1470s; he commissioned scribal work himself and must have employed binders and other artisans who were already experienced in the craft of making manuscripts.¹⁰⁵ Perhaps most importantly, he chose—as almost the first text to come off his press—one that had long been a part of a scribal industry, provincial and metropolitan, in England.

The major argument of this chapter follows from these observations. Manuscript production, in its commercial element in particular, consolidated certain conditions of fifteenth-century literary culture. New sorts of vernacular writing had produced a great many new English texts—some threatening enough to prompt acts of censorship, as Archbishop Arundel's Constitutions of 1409 suggest.¹⁰⁶ These English texts could acquire value, seem more stable or more licit, by way of a connection to an author. In the case of *The Canterbury Tales* the tradition is as old as the first copies made from Chaucer's scrappy original, and as old as Chaucer's own response to his role as a maker of fiction. The authors on the Canterbury pilgrimage assign meaning to their tales in ways that can be variously interpreted—as ironic or sensible, worthy or inadequate. Books like Adam Pinkhurst's Hengwrt and Ellesmere manuscripts of *The Canterbury Tales*, the work of John Shirley, the Hammond-scribe, or even part-time copyists of books like the Norwich clerk Geoffrey Spirleng and his son, similarly tell a story about the author as they create a single codicological unit out of diffuse textual fragments.¹⁰⁷ This story involves the provision of missing links between fragments and the assignment of tales to pilgrims and pilgrims to tales. Chaucer is the measure of the bounds of his project: 'Heere is *ended* the book of the tales of Caunterbury', writes Pinkhurst in Ellesmere before adding that it was compiled by 'Geffrey Chaucer of whos soule Jhesu crist haue mercy amen' (fol. 232v, emphasis added). John Shirley can

¹⁰⁵ On Caxton's employment of, or proximity to, a binder, see Nixon, 'Caxton and Book-Binding'; on the pen and ink drawings done in books linked to him by a Low Countries artist, the so-called Caxton Master, perhaps occasionally based in his shop, see Scott, *The Caxton Master and His Patrons*.

¹⁰⁶ See Watson, 'Censorship and Cultural Change in Late-Medieval England'. The question of how censorship affected the representation of texts needs further consideration: the effect of Arundel's measures was complex, given the fifteenth-century surge in levels of vernacular, including religious, book production. However, a copy of *The Canterbury Tales* (or at least a book described in this way) was among the texts that brought one fifteenth-century Lollard to trial (Hudson, 'Lollard Book Production', 125 and n. 2).

¹⁰⁷ See Beadle, 'Geoffrey Spirleng (c.1426–c.1474)'.

assure his readers, in rubric recorded in BL Harley 7333, that the book he has made is for ‘disporte and leorning of all þoo that beon gentile of birthe’. Gentility is assured by the ascription of the text: it was first made for its readers ‘by þe laureal and moste famous poete’, an at once Latinate and Francophone ‘Chaucyer a Gavfrede’ (fol. 37r).

Harley 7333 itself suggests the nature of the culture of book production described in this chapter. Parts of it were made by a group of at least six scribes with access to a wide range of exemplars working in careful collaboration, perhaps at or for St Mary de Pratis, the Austin house in Leicester that housed the book by the late fifteenth century. Other parts of the book were made in different ways—an initial and perhaps independent booklet contains an acephalous and incomplete *Brut* copied by a scribe working alone; a quire signed ‘Doctor Peni wirt this booke’ (fol. 150r)—perhaps by John Peny, canon, prior, and then abbot of St Mary de Pratis from 1480 to 1496—was penned by two scribes whose hands appear nowhere else.¹⁰⁸ In this manuscript, the modes of book production I describe above converge. If its scribes were canons, their access to and interest in vernacular materials is striking. If they were lay professionals, then their work, like that of the Hammond- or *Edmund-Fremund* scribe, signals a new stage and new degree of organization in commercial English manuscript production. In either case, Harley 7333 must *also* be seen to represent the shifting, flexible contexts in which the English books that were available to Caxton were made: it is a collection of booklets as well as a book, a jumble of materials assembled as, and probably because, they came to hand.

In such contexts, the connection between copies of Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* and the medieval author was not ‘stedfast’. The Parson’s Tale, for instance, was at times detached from the *Tales* and passed on in booklet form. It appears separately after a copy of Melibee and before a few of the minor Chaucerian pieces Caxton printed 1476–7 in Camb. Magdalene Pepys 2006. In Wiltshire, Longleat Library 29 it is grouped with mystical religious material. Pepys has the Retraction and the Parson’s Prologue; Longleat lacks any information that might suggest this treatise on penitence is by Chaucer. One reason that Chaucer retracts his texts is that he knows that this is the world in which his texts will subsist. It is a world in which books are made, and their

¹⁰⁸ Mooney, ‘John Shirley’s Heirs’, 190–6; the arguments of Kline, ‘Scribal Agendas and the Text of Chaucer’s *Tales* in British Library MS Harley 7333’ do not seem sustainable from the codicological evidence.

worth measured in a great variety of ways. It is a rather fraught place for fiction. Works must be listed and their authorship declared if writers are to hold onto their place in literary history. And yet Chaucer takes his stance in the Retraction, issues his challenge to posterity, at the same moment that he doubts the worth (however ironically) of his literary endeavours. He also forgets (however intentionally) to name himself. He exhibits a willingness to let his texts go forth in the world, but at the same time reminds us that the person who wrote them will not be in attendance. The author who speaks in a text does not speak as himself; the explicit to Caxton's 1476 Parson's Tale makes the point well—he always speaks *as* a fiction. The maker of medieval texts has taken his leave. The gap left was sometimes—and sometimes not—filled by the makers of fifteenth-century manuscripts. After 1473–4, it was a space open to the makers of printed books as well.

2

Good Utterance: Printing and Innovation after 1478

When Chaucer reaches the House of Rumour, accompanied by his feathered guide to the worlds of the *House of Fame*, he finds it

ful of gygges,
And also ful eke of chirkynges,
And of many other werkynge.

(ll. 1942–4)

It is a place for the rapid, almost mechanized reproduction of utterances, for tumultuous ‘rounynges and ... jangles’ (l. 1960) that are specifically sounds made by physical activity—‘chirkynges’ produced by the grinding of two hard surfaces together and ‘gygges’ (a word nowhere else recorded), the sound made by a bow on string (from Old French *giguer*).¹ Chaucer’s verse is extended thematically as well as lexically at this moment to encompass concerns typical of his dream visions: the difference between lyric voices (courtly or angelic) and their discordant opposite—the democratized, jangling rumours of an unrestrained multitude. But the *House of Fame* says something else about noise. In the House of Rumour sounds are ‘werkinges’: they seem to have material as well as auditory form. Each ‘newe tydyng’ (l. 2045) is figured as a little *thing*, small enough to fit through ‘som crevace’, winged so that it might ‘flygh forth faste for the nones’ (ll. 2086–7). Chaucer’s House and its occupants are borrowed—from Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* and from the magical worlds of medieval romance.² But we can imagine that they look forward as well as backwards, to the grind of the printer’s shop, to the ‘Caxtons’ imagined by Craig Raine, ‘mechanical birds with

¹ *MED*, s.v. ‘chirkinge’, ‘gigge’.

² On the sources and sounds of the poem, see Minnis, *The Shorter Poems*, 185–6, 203–7.

many wings ... [that] perch on the hand', or in Chaucer's poem, that are perched on a windowsill: ³

And somtyme saugh I thoo at ones
 A lesyng and a sad soth sawe,
 That gonne of aventure drawe
 Out at a wyndowe for to pace;
 And, when they metten in that place,
 They were achekked bothe two,
 And neyther of hem moste out goo
 For other, so they gonne crowde,
 Til ech of hem gan crien lowde,
 'Lat me go first!' 'Nay, but let me!
 And here I wol ensuren the,
 With the nones that thou wolt do so,
 That I shal never fro the go,
 But be thyn owne sworn brother!'

(ll. 2088–101)

It is, notably, as 'neyther of hem moste out goo' that Caxton's own, 1483 edition of Chaucer's *House of Fame* breaks off (D5r).⁴ A new ending, ascribed to the printer is appended: the dreamer, predictably enough, wakes up. Caxton then describes the trouble to which he has gone to finish the poem in a prose epilogue:

I fynde no more of this werke tofore-sayde, for as fer as I can understonde this noble man Gefferey Chaucer fynysshed at the sayd conclusion of the metyng of lesyng and sothsawe where as yet they ben chekked and maye not departe.⁵

As it is in this epilogue, the authorship of 'The book of Fame made by Gefferey Chaucer' is attested from the start of the 1483 edition, and Caxton makes his reason for presenting his book in this way quite clear (A2r). The maker of 'the book of Fame', whether he finished the text or not, and regardless of its rather unsettling conclusion, was a 'noble man'.⁶

³ See Raine, *Collected Poems, 1978–1999*, 'A Martian Sends a Postcard Home', ll. 1–6.

⁴ STC 5087, IMEV 991. The three manuscript witnesses, Bodl. Fairfax 16 and Bodley 638 and Camb. Magdalene Pepys 2006 (described in the previous chapter) end at line 2158. Debate over the reason for the text's incomplete status is summarized by Minnis, *The Shorter Poems*, 245–51.

⁵ Caxton's *Own Prose*, *House of Fame*, Epilogue, 14–17.

⁶ Chaucer gets even nobler in print: he is 'syr Geffray Chaucher knyght' on the title page to the 1548? edition of the *Plowman's Tale*, described in Ch. 5; an engraved family tree linking him to royalty first appears in *The workes*, STC 5077, in 1598.

Caxton's text was probably taken from the same group of exemplars as were his 1476–7 editions of *Anelida*, *The Parliament of Fowls*, and the short Lydgate poems described in the last chapter (it may even be a new version of a lost edition from this group). Ennobled and authored, it is worthy of the larger folio format it here receives.⁷ The printer Caxton is likewise given his due, named as the text's editor and as its printer. Were he and the author to arrive in the House of Fame and find it

al ful, ywys,
Of hem that writen olde gestes
As ben on trees rokes nestes
(ll. 1514–16)

they could be picked out from the multitude and in Chaucer's 'noble' case, lauded by Lady Fame's heralds appropriately.

However, it will be remembered by any reader of *The House of Fame* that Chaucer is there, as elsewhere in his verse, profoundly doubtful of the value of authorial reputation.⁸ Those at Lady Fame's court are rewarded for 'shrewednesse' as well as virtue; wrong is done in the quest for renown as often as good (l. 1853). In the House of Rumour, lies and true statements are produced with equal and equally alarming alacrity and without any real prospect of a 'man of gret auctorite', who might distinguish one from the other, but who never arrives in Chaucer's unfinished poem (l. 2158). Caxton, in his epilogue to the text, seems quite as conscious of the complexities of the situation as his *auctor*. He is unable to go as 'fer' as he would like: he is transfixed, like—or perhaps *by*—a 'lesyng and a sad soth sawe'. The troubles that have 'acheekked' him are several-fold. He must find complete rather than fragmentary texts to fill his presses or, at least, find ways to make these texts seem desirable to his customers. He must give his wares 'good vtteraunce', value as marketable goods. There is a contradiction inherent in this last task. 'Vtteraunce', a term used in a c.1510 bill that Pynson put before Chancery, and in contemporary poems by the printer Robert Copland, meant the bartering or trading value of a book. But in the

⁷ On the textual affiliations of Caxton's edition, see Brusendorff, *Chaucer Tradition*, 195–7. A Caxton edition may also lie behind Julian Notary's 1500? *Complaint of Mars* and *Complaint of Venus* (STC 5089, IMEV 913 and 3542, with 'Lenvoy de Chaucer a Bukton', IMEV 2262 and 'Pageant of Knowledge', IMEV 3651).

⁸ Chaucer says that Fame's heralds 'crien ryche folkes laudes' as he conflates worldly wealth with reputation and doubts the value of both (*House of Fame*, 1322).

late Middle Ages it also retained its familiar sense of 'expression'.⁹ The 'good' of a book was partly its status as an utterance divorced from its meaning—a commodity. I argued in the last chapter that Caxton gave his 1473–4 *Recuyell* a kind of 'good vtteraunce' as he linked his translation to bespoke textual production, the ritualized presentation of books within a feudal gift economy, and English authors. He gave *The House of Fame* good utterance in 1483 by naming 'noble' Chaucer as its maker and by elevating his own status as the book's producer in the process. This is a paradox in early English print culture, for it suggests the inclination of the producer of printed books to market his wares as something that they are not: utterances with no place in a money economy, that is.¹⁰ Most early printed books (at least the large number that were not gifted but sold) *were* commodities, exchanged for cash or credit rather than for the reputation of a noble author or for the dissemination of moralized subject matter. A printed book was one of an increasing number of 'tydyng[e]' available in a labile economy in which a book could be valued as a good, rather than for the good it contained. That which checks Caxton is precisely that which would stop any 'man of ... auctorite', or any man interested in authority, in his tracks: the realization that a text may be a 'lesyng' or a 'sad soth sawe' but it will 'flygh forth faste' regardless—pressed inexorably on by a breathless rush of alliterative sounds, or by a bookseller's profit motive, and not by its essential merit or its truth.

The winged rumours in *The House of Fame* suggest that Chaucer and his contemporaries had already imagined the situation that confronted Caxton in 1483. Paul Strohm argues that truth and falsehood swear allegiance in the poem in the context of new commercial opportunities, new kinds of opportunism, and an attendant revaluing and even devaluing of the status of spoken and written utterances.¹¹ The framework for understanding printed books in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was, I would therefore argue, prescribed. There existed patterns for the rapid transmission of texts before printing that contributed to late medieval anxieties about the instability of discourse. *Piers Plowman* is full of superfluous and untrustworthy documents, just as the bag of books in *Mum and the Sothsegger* is bursting with

⁹ See *MED*, s.v. 'outraunce'; Plomer, 'Two Lawsuits of Richard Pynson', 126; and Copland, *Robert Copland: Poems, The Seuen Sorowes*, Prologue, 22: 'But bokes of vertue haue none vtteraunce'.

¹⁰ On Caxton and 'paradox' of print, see Kuskin, 'Reading Caxton'.

¹¹ Strohm, *Social Chaucer*, ch. 4, esp. 96.

many a pryue poysse ... preyntid withynne
Yn bokes vnbredid in balade-wise made,

including a 'penyworth of papir of penys'; 'a volume of visitacion'; 'a rolle of religion'; and 'a paire of pamphilettz of prelatz'.¹² But it is the contention of this chapter and this study that it was rapidly apparent to the likes of Caxton that printed books *were* different from their scribal analogues. They existed in greater numbers. It is estimated that the average London scribe was capable of copying about two pages of continuous prose in a *textura* hand and four–six pages in a more cursive script per day. If this is even approximately right, a single cursive manuscript of a long text such as Lydgate's *Fall of Princes* (which averages about 180 folio manuscript leaves of verse) was work for a few months.¹³ Compositors and printers took some time to set up and print off and collate long texts, but the result was not one but multiple books. When Pynson took his claim to Chancery c.1510 he described his production, in the 1490s, of a single edition of 600 copies of Lydgate's *Fall of Princes* and even larger editions—1,000 'Jornalles' (perhaps 'diurnal' service books). These numbers accord, broadly, with continental evidence for the size of editions, and contemporary accounts make it clear that, almost from the first, the work of printers outstripped that of scribes.¹⁴

These new economies for production meant that printed books could also be made and sold more cheaply than manuscripts. The 'penyworth' documents described by the author of *Mum and the Sothsegger* may indicate that it was always possible to get certain kinds of texts 'good chepe', as Caxton describes the first printed edition of the Sarum *Ordinale* in his 1477 advertisement for it.¹⁵ But what little research

¹² Barr (ed.), *The Piers Plowman Tradition*, ll. 1344–70. On the status of documents and documentary varieties of complaint in this period, see Steiner, *Documentary Culture and the Making of Medieval English Literature*, and Lindenbaum, 'London Texts and Literate Practice'.

¹³ Kwakkel summarizes various enumerative studies in this way in 'A New Type of Book for a New Type of Reader', 243 and n. 86. 'Pages' might vary in size, of course. Bell's figures may therefore be helpful: he estimates that English scribes copied 3,300 words per day into academic books, meaning it took sixteen weeks or so for a scribe to make a single copy of a Latin *Vitas Patrum* ('The Price of Books in Medieval England', 316–17). See Lydgate, *Fall of Princes*, iv. 1–105 for descriptions of most *Fall* manuscripts.

¹⁴ See Plomer, 'Two Lawsuits of Richard Pynson'. For continental evidence, Flood, 'Volentes sibi comparare infrascriptos libros impressos ...', 139–42. For excellent reasons to be cautious about actual figures for printed book production, see Dane, *The Myth of Print Culture*, 32–56. I am nevertheless inclined to think print runs often ran to hundreds of books.

¹⁵ *STC* 4890; the *Ordinale* is *STC* 16228.

we have on this point suggests that there was a drop in cost between manuscripts and printed books, and that prices continued to drop during the first fifty years of mechanized production in England.¹⁶ And the book trade itself had changed: from a mostly, perhaps entirely, bespoke to a truly speculative business; from the sorts of loose networks of amateur and professional, metropolitan, and household scribes and booksellers described in Chapter 1 to an important for-profit industry increasingly linked to the powerful London Company of Stationers. When Caxton's most prolific successors, Richard Pynson and Wynkyn de Worde, began work in the 1490s they were foreigners (De Worde denizenized, Pynson a Norman 'native') whose only significant competition was from those at work on the continent and those importing continental books. By the time of Pynson's death in 1529, both were citizens of London by admission to the Stationers' Company and there were more than a dozen printers and/or publishers operating in London and its environs alone.¹⁷

Printers themselves worried, sometimes wittily, about the implications of these new conditions for textual production. De Worde is concerned that a text might 'come to the hondys of eche ydle persone whyche wolde desire it yf it were enprynted allone by itself & put in a lytyll plaunflet'.¹⁸ His apprentice and later printer and stationer, the translator and poet Robert Copland, begrudges the average buyer the penny he will offer for a book, and says that

the tongue must euer wagge *and* clatter
And waste ... wyndes, to medle of eche matter
Thus ben we prynters called on so fast

—called on, he suggests, to produce as many books as there are 'tidinges' in the world.¹⁹ An old and a Chaucerian concern was given new voice

¹⁶ Thomas Lympnour of Bury St Edmunds was paid 12*d.* in 1467 for copying a calendar (about 3,000 words); the parchment for such a book probably increased costs by half (Bell, 'The Price of Books in Medieval England', 314–15, 320–1). One or two decades later, a paper book of two printed sheets, which could readily bear 3,000 words, was worth just a penny (Bennett, 'Notes on English Retail Book Prices', 174). On falling prices of printed books, see Jensen, 'Text-Books in the Universities', 354–79, who notes the unreliability of all such figures. More work on book prices from manuscript to print—work that takes account of such matters as inflation, currency devaluation, definitions of 'worth', and problems of accuracy—is urgently needed.

¹⁷ Blayney, *The Stationers' Company before the Charter, 1403–1557*, 23–5; for London printers and publishers, see *STC*, Index I.

¹⁸ *STC* 3309, 14v; see Keiser, 'Practical Books for the Gentleman', 470.

¹⁹ *Robert Copland: Poems, The Seuen Sorowes*, Prologue, 9–11, 5.

and new urgency by the press. How can one control the meaning of an utterance? How could printers make their books, large or small, seem worthwhile when their job was to produce them in larger numbers and in the process cheapen them? How could a customer who had not *planned* to buy a book be persuaded to buy one? How could new books be made to seem as good as old ones? There was an opening for something or someone that might sort the good from the bad, the small from the substantial, truth from lies. In this chapter I will explore the various ways in which ‘this noble man Gefferey Chaucer’ and his follower Lydgate were employed to fill that gap.

CAXTON, CHAUCER, AND FOLIO *SAMMELBÄNDE*

At least four of the surviving copies of Caxton’s edition of *Boece* of 1478²⁰—and a great many of his Chaucer folios of the 1480s—*Troilus*, *The House of Fame*, and the illustrated second edition of *The Canterbury Tales*²¹—are still found bound in *Sammelbände* or were once a part of such composite volumes that have since been disbound. In the last chapter I argued that *Sammelbände*, like manuscript booklets, allowed for a dynamic aspect in the early trade in printed books. They could accommodate the whims of buyers, and they suggest the importance of those whims to the producers of all late medieval books, manuscript and print alike. I argue below that, in certain ways, this remained true throughout the period of concern in this study. But *Sammelbände* containing copies of Caxton’s folio Chaucer editions—which were more expensive to produce than his small pamphlets of Chaucerian verse and presumably cost more to buy—suggest something else as well.²² As they

²⁰ STC 3199, in prose.

²¹ *Troilus* is STC 5094, 1483, and contains IMEV 3327; *House of Fame* is STC 5087, IMEV 991; the second 1483 edition of the *Tales* is STC 5083, and contains IMEV 4019.

²² Quarto editions were not cheap editions *per se*. A quarto edition was probably only cheaper if it required the printing of fewer sheets than a folio, as most cost was in paper. Caxton printed five stanzas per folio page in his 1483 *Troilus* and printed it on nearly sixty sheets; Wynkyn de Worde printed the 1517 *Troilus* (discussed in the next chapter) at just over four stanzas per quarto page and used fewer than forty sheets. By comparison, the 1498 De Worde folio edition of *The Assembly of Gods*, described in detail below, used fewer than ten sheets, because it was printed double column, while his quarto editions used more than ten. It is possible that, because much longer texts *had* to be printed in folio (fat quarto editions being too cumbersome), the folio format was linked, in some

issued growing numbers of printed books for the English market book producers and retailers sought, and found, new mechanisms to single out, promote, and also to link their wares, and so help them 'flygh forth faste for the nones'.

The Oxford, Magdalen copy of Caxton's *Boece* is the most perfect known and only uncut copy of the edition. It was bound in sheepskin and boards, probably in the fifteenth century, alongside an imperfect copy of Johann Koelhoff's 1481 edition of the Latin *Consolatione*, printed in Cologne.²³ Both parts were owned by an 'Edwardus Smyth' who left his name in a late fifteenth- or early sixteenth-century documentary hand on the inside cover and again in a secretary hand on a page of Caxton's edition.²⁴ The Magdalen *Boece* reminds us of something easily forgotten in a study primarily concerned with English vernacular texts: the continent, and continental books, were just a short voyage away. As a merchant adventurer and in the late 1460s as governor of the English nation at Bruges, Caxton had been a part of the complex diplomatic and economic manoeuvrings upon which England's extensive European trading network and his own livelihood depended.²⁵ When he arrived back in London, not only did he find scribes busy making copies of *The Canterbury Tales*, he also found fellow citizens—drapers, grocers, mercers, stationers, and even men later styled 'bokeprynter' in contemporary documents—peddling books that had been printed abroad as a 'a brand new line in the small-wares trade'.²⁶ The importation of books was important business in England. The role of foreign bookmen was of sufficient importance in 1484 to warrant their exemption from a proclamation by Richard III restricting the commercial activities of foreign artisans and merchants.²⁷ The trade has been measured by Margaret Lane Ford, who describes the arrival of hundreds of (surviving) books in

customers' minds, to greater expense, and printers could retail folios at a slightly higher price, regardless of cost, or promote folios as somehow more valuable. More research on all these points would be useful (taking account of cost of compositors' labour, for instance).

²³ The book is B. III. 2. 12; Donaghey, 'Caxton's Printing of Chaucer's *Boece*', Appendix, no. 9.

²⁴ Smith leaves a very detailed ownership inscription naming associates and those who borrowed the book but I have not, surprisingly, been able to identify him or those he describes yet.

²⁵ See Painter, *William Caxton*, chs. 3–6, and Blake, *Caxton and His World*, ch. 2.

²⁶ Pollard, 'The English Market for Printed Books' (13), and Sutton, 'Caxton Was a Mercer', for the early records of 'bokeprynter[s]', 136–7.

²⁷ Discussed in Sutton and Visser-Fuchs, *Richard III's Books*, 251–8, where the act is printed in full with the French. It exempts 'writer lymprer bynder or imprynter' (251).

England from the 1470s to the 1490s, the majority of these from Venice, Cologne, Basle, and Paris.²⁸ Caxton's name appears in the customs rolls as an importer of these books and, having trained and worked in Cologne and Bruges, it appears he retained other kinds of connections with continental bookmen.²⁹ The link between his operation and that of his former Bruges partner, the limner Colard Mansion, for instance, has often been noted. Several Caxton editions, and his translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, are English versions of texts printed by Mansion after 1475, when Caxton left Bruges for Westminster. Mansion's books seem to have found their way into Caxton's hands very rapidly; they served as examples for him to follow as he competed for a share in the English market for printed books.³⁰

That market seems, even from this distance, to have been bustling and lively. It incorporated London traders and their foreign associates, continental workers come to find employment in England, English craftsmen learning new skills, established and perhaps new custom for scribes and booksellers, and ports and customs officials busy handling shiploads of books.³¹ It seems possible that among the books that made it all the way to Caxton's shop in 1477–8 was a copy of Mansion's edition of Boethius's *De consolacione philosophiae*. Mansion printed a French translation of Boethius's text with commentary by Reynier de Saint Trudon within a year of Caxton's own printing of Chaucer's English text.³² In Caxton's editions, learned commentary at the end of Mansion's book—a life of Boethius—is replaced by a Latin humanist epitaph for Chaucer. Caxton's *Boece*, like Mansion's, is in a format that enables it to be set easily alongside editions of Latin printed versions

²⁸ Ford, 'Importation of Printed Books into England and Scotland'. Ford makes only cursory reference to the problem of survival (Italian, often humanist printed books were quickly more 'collectable' than the sorts of devotional material produced by presses in France, the Low Countries, and Germany at this time, and suffered less depredation as a result of the dissolution and reform). See also Armstrong, 'English Purchases of Printed Books from the Continent, 1465–1526'.

²⁹ Kerling, 'Caxton and the Trade in Printed Books'; Needham, 'The Customs Rolls and the Printed-Book Trade'.

³⁰ For discussion of the versions of 'Boethius, Cato, Dicts, Art of Dying, Controversie de noblesse, Ovid' produced by both men, see Painter, *William Caxton*, 80 n. 3. See also Edwards, 'Continental Influences on London Printing and Reading in the Fifteenth and Early Sixteenth Centuries', and further discussion of Mansion in Saenger, 'Colard Mansion and the Evolution of the Printed Book'. The dates of several of Mansion's books are uncertain (see *ISTC*) but his Boethius and Ovid certainly predate Caxton's.

³¹ See Sutton and Visser-Fuchs, *Richard III's Books*, ch. 10.

³² Mansion's edition was printed in Bruges, 28 June 1477.

of *De consolatione* available to contemporary book buyers like Edward Smith.³³

It has often been observed that Caxton's printed books are, for all their continental antecedents, distinct from the great bulk of those available in print to the English buyer. The 1478 *Boece* testifies to this marriage of foreign fashion and local flavour.³⁴ Like the c.1476 *Canterbury Tales*, a few surviving copies of Chaucer's *Boece* may be linked to commercial scribes. But the survival rate is much lower than for the *Tales*—just ten books including fragments—and most surviving copies that can be traced to early owners are of monastic or clerical provenance.³⁵ Caxton himself writes that he printed the text at the request of a 'gossib', having selected it despite its being 'not spred ne knowen, as it is digne and worthy'.³⁶ The impetus for the edition was, by inference, twofold: the advice of a friend and neighbour—a London 'gossib'—and the limited availability of a vernacular English version of a text readily and newly available in Latin and French in print. Caxton's edition declares that his is the same text, translated by the father of *English* letters,

Maister Geffrey Chaucer ... oute of Latyn into oure usual and moder tonge, folowyng the Latyn as neygh as is possible to be understande. Wherein in myne oppynyon he hath deservid a perpetuell lawde and thanke of al this noble royaume of Englonde. (24–9)

By another happy accident, the author is buried just around the corner from Caxton's shop:

[T]he body and corps lieth buried in th'Abbay of Westmestre beside London tofore the Chapele of Seynte Benet, by whos sepulture is wreton on a table hongyng on a pylere his Epitaphye maad by a poete laureat. (46–9)

The poet laureate described here, Stefano Surigone, was a humanist writer then residing in England with loose affiliations to the universities.³⁷ Through his offices, the movement of the book is reversed: a 'usual

³³ For four folio editions of the Latin text available by 1478, see *ISTC*, s.v. 'Boethius': two vernacular versions (including Mansion's) had also been printed by this time, as had four quarto editions of the text.

³⁴ See, for instance, Blake, *Caxton and his World*, ch. 4, and for a more recent view, Kuskin, 'Caxton's Worthies Series', 'Caxton's task ... was to find a way to make his vernacular canon relevant to all those participating in English polity' (523).

³⁵ On Pinkhurst's copy, see Mooney, 'Chaucer's Scribe'; Shirley copied the text in BL Add. 16165. For the remainder, including a copy by the commercial scribe of CUL Gg. 4. 27, see Seymour, *A Catalogue of Chaucer Manuscripts: Volume I*, 43–53.

³⁶ *Caxton's Own Prose*, Boece, Epilogue, 33–4.

³⁷ Weiss, *Humanism in England during the Fifteenth-Century*, 138–9. On his links to Caxton, see Painter, *William Caxton*, 92–3.

and moder tongue' is itself translated into the international language of *encomia*. He, or perhaps Caxton himself, adds further verses to those of praise:

Post obitum Caxton voluit te vivere cura
 Willemi, Chaucer clare poeta, tui;
 Nam tua non solum compressit opuscula formis
 Has quoque sed laudes iussit hic essa tuas.

(53–6)

[It was the eager wish of your admirer William Caxton that you should live, illustrious poet Chaucer. For not only has he printed your works but he has also ordered this eulogy of you to be here].³⁸

The verses are 'hic', here, in a book *and* here, where Chaucer's 'body and corps lieth' in Westminster, the place where Caxton does business. In this instance, the cultural, pan-European value of *studia humanitatis* is conferred upon the workings of a Westminster printing press whose products had to be distinct from, and so moveable within, England's market for printed books.³⁹ Whether or not Caxton had the epitaph to Chaucer written or hung in Westminster (a matter of some scholarly discussion from the sixteenth century forward), his book carefully reconstructs the 'table' for posterity.⁴⁰ And the tablet, meanwhile, becomes an advertisement for the printed page that remembers it, affixed to a pillar in Westminster within reach of Caxton's shop. Wherever Caxton's edition of *Boece* travelled—or with whichever foreign books it competed for a market share—it recalled its place in the world of fifteenth-century *English* printed book production at the same time that it recalled its author.

Caxton was not the first to write flatteringly of the author of *Boece*: Chaucer was.⁴¹ But his depiction of 'maister Geoffrey Chaucer' does constitute a response to some new conditions for the circulation of English vernacular texts: specifically the proliferation, at home and abroad, of printed books, not only by Caxton but by dozens of continental printers—like Colard Mansion, or like Johann Koelhoff of Cologne whose press supplied a companion volume for one copy of Caxton's *Boece*.

³⁸ Translation from Brewer (ed.), *Chaucer: The Critical Heritage*, i. 1385–1837, 78–9.

³⁹ See Rundle, 'Humanism before the Tudors', for useful discussion.

⁴⁰ See the stimulating discussion in Dane, *Who is Buried in Chaucer's Tomb?*, 14–16.

⁴¹ In his Retraction, where 'Boece de Consolacione' is a text worth saving (*Canterbury Tales*, x. 1088).

The wide circulation of Boethius's *De consolazione* in Caxton's carefully ascribed edition of Chaucer's somewhat unknown translation was also novel. Twenty-one complete copies of the 1478 *Boece* are known to scholars: more than double the number that survive for the whole century before Caxton's edition.⁴² A *Sammelband* donated to the Bodleian Library in the late seventeenth century containing *Boece* gathers didactic texts and is replete with the signatures of London citizens, members of the lower gentry, and their wives: the sort of men and women who were Caxton's gossips, but also, as I argue above, his customers.⁴³ Two other *Sammelbände* are notable as collections of broadly devotional pieces; they unite *Boece* with such prose works as Nicholas Love's *Speculum vitae Christi* and *The Orcharde of Syon* and Lydgate's verse *Life of Our Lady*.⁴⁴

Such *Sammelbände* are probably consumer-initiated books, made up from items gathered together by accident or by design at some remove from the trade counter.⁴⁵ They signal the near-contemporary availability of a range of different vernacular works in multiple copies in print; and they also signal the use, to producers, of paratextual devices for the promotion of multiple meanings for books. English authors—'Maister Geffrey Chaucer' or 'dan John lydgate monke of Burye', working 'at the excitacion' of Henry V and named in rubric for *The Life of Our Lady*, rubric that Caxton's compositor carried over from his manuscript exemplar—are overlaid by other taxonomies for printed texts.⁴⁶ Caxton and Surigone's prayers for Chaucer's soul in *Boece* and the Christian

⁴² See Donaghey, 'Caxton's Printing of Chaucer's *Boece*', Appendix.

⁴³ Oxford, Bodl. Arch. G d. 13 (1–4). The *Sammelband* is intact and contains, in addition to *Boece*: Cato's distichs, *Book callid Caton*, 1484 (STC 4853); *The knyght of the toure*, 1484 (STC 15296); *Fables of Esope*, 1484 (STC 175). See Needham, *The Printer and the Pardoner*, Appendix B, no. 16. It was intact by the time of its Tudor annotations; the same hands appear in several items; debts to a 'John Smythe of London Sederler' (perhaps relative of the Richard Smith, Sadler, whose will was proved 1591, PCC Prob. 11/78) are recorded; another hand notes the departure of the earl of Bury (Charles Brandon) from Lambeth to the North in 1514.

⁴⁴ Respectively, Oxford, Wadham A. 6. 11: *Boece* with the *Speculum*, 1494 (STC 3262); and Oxford, Exeter 9M. 4815: *Boece*, the *Orcharde*, 1519 (STC 4815); *Book callid Caton*, 1484 (STC 4853); and Caxton's 1483 edition of Lydgate's *Life of Our Lady*, STC 17023, containing IMEV 2574. Needham, *The Printer and the Pardoner*, Appendix B, no. 36, 11 (both volumes intact, no sign of independent circulation of items).

⁴⁵ See Gillespie, 'Poets, Printers, and Early English *Sammelbände*'.

⁴⁶ The rubric appears on the recto of the first unsigned folio. Eleven of forty-seven scribal copies have nearly identical versions, suggesting it derives from the presentation copy (*A Critical Edition of John Lydgate's Life of Our Lady*, 21–50). See also Keiser, 'Ordinatio in the Manuscripts of John Lydgate's *Lyf of Our Lady*'.

consolations of that text suggest a devotional framework for its consumption, as well as one in which the work is valued as that of an English writer. The derivative rubric preserved in the 1483 *Life of Our Lady*, like the paratext in many scribal copies of his *Troy Book*, celebrates Lydgate as a poet to kings. But in the same breath Lydgate is credited with writing a most pious work on the 'byrthe of our moste blessyd lady / mayde wyf / and moder of our lord Jhesu cryst', and Caxton, imitating fifteenth-century authorial traditions, also closes the text by gesturing to liturgical observation and popular piety by including some Latin offices followed by vernacular lyrics that explicate their devotional value for a lay or even unlettered reader. 'Say they thyse balades folowynge', suggests Caxton, perhaps imagining them read aloud by the head of some household group.⁴⁷ The book thus ends as other Caxton editions of texts sometimes ascribed to Lydgate do, as a work of piety: *The Court of Sapience* concludes with 'these thynges folowynge is euery Crysten man and Woman holde / and bounde to lerne' (E5r);⁴⁸ *The Pilgrimage of the Life of Man* is said to have been published in a time that 'endeth in the Vigyle of seynt Bartholomew' (O4v).⁴⁹ My argument here is twofold: Caxton's folio editions were increasingly carefully framed as books by promotional material that suggested aspects of their worth, but the forms of early folio *Sammelbände* also indicate that the meanings Caxton drew out of the texts he printed and gave as reasons to buy his books were loose, their appeal to readers broad.

Caxton's presentation of the 1483 *Canterbury Tales* and the history of copies of this and his other 1480s Chaucer editions, conform to this pattern. The second edition of this text is markedly different from the first of 1476. Caxton singles out the new edition's value as he describes his careful editing of the text,

to th'ende that it be made accordyng unto his owen makynge, for I fynde many of the sayd bookes whyche wryters have abyrdgyd it and many thynges left out, and ... have sette certayn versys that he never made ne sette in hys booke.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ For the text, see *Caxton's Own Prose*, *Life of Our Lady*, Epilogue.

⁴⁸ STC 17015, IMEV 3406 and devotional prose lists. On the manuscript tradition for the additions, see Harvey (ed.), *The Court of Sapience*, pp. xiii–xiiiv; the work is first ascribed to Lydgate by Stephen Hawes (*Pastime of Pleasure*, l. 1357).

⁴⁹ STC 6473–4 (two issues), IMEV 4265. On the fifteenth-century evidence (an account of Alice de la Pole, Duchess of Suffolk) for authorship of *The Pilgrimage*, see Walls, 'Did Lydgate Translate the "Pèlerinage de Vie Humaine"?', and Firth Green, 'Lydgate and Deguileville Once More'.

⁵⁰ *Caxton's Own Prose*, *Canterbury Tales*, Prologue, 32–6.

His articulation of his editorial practice distinguishes his work from that in the 'sayd bookes'—copies of his earlier edition ('whyche anon were sold to many and dyverse gentylmen', Prologue, 40–1), and the scribal copies still available to readers like the gentleman who 'ful gentylly gate of hys fader ... and delyverd' a new version to the printer (Prologue, 57–8). The manuscript tradition of *The Canterbury Tales* is full of evidence of careful editorial work. The makers of Chaucer's manuscripts were perfectly well aware that the text had 'many thynges left out', as the treatment of The Parson's, Cook's, and Squire's Tales in scribal copies suggests.⁵¹ But if they sought to make Chaucer's books as he made 'hys booke', no scribe ever said as much as clearly as Caxton does, at least not in any surviving copy.

Caxton's ascription of the 1483 edition of *The Canterbury Tales* is part of a plan to distinguish it, as *Boece* is distinguished, from a mass of printed material. It is also part of a plan to describe links between some of Caxton's wares. In 1483, soon after issuing the *Tales*, Caxton printed two other texts that Chaucer claims as his own in his Retraction: *The House of Fame* and *Troilus*. Together the books constituted an opportunity for purchasers to assemble *Sammelbände* containing Chaucer's works. In such a collection, the 1483 *Troilus*, which Caxton, like most scribes, reproduced without ascription, would be the logical extension of Chaucer and the printer's claims that certain texts are of his 'owen makynge'. John Leland's *Scriptores* (his Chaucer entry probably composed in the late 1530s) supplies evidence that near-contemporary readers responded to Caxton's tactics. Caxton, he writes,

constat primum Londini artem exercuisse typographicam, *Chauceri* opera quotquot vel pretio, vel precibus comparare potuit, in unum uolumen collegisse [known to be the first to practise the art of printing at London, collected the works of Chaucer in one volume—however many he could get by buying or begging].⁵²

Thomas Tyrwhitt was the first to observe that there is no book extant which fits Leland's description of Caxton's edition and later commentators have accepted the point.⁵³ But it should be remembered

⁵¹ See Windeatt, 'The Scribes as Chaucer's Early Critics'; Partridge, 'Minding the Gaps'.

⁵² Leland's *Scriptores*, Bodl. Top. Gen. C. 4r, fol. 160r; cited here from Hammond, *Chaucer*, 4.

⁵³ Tyrwhitt (ed.), *The Canterbury Tales of Chaucer*, i. 72, n. e.

that Tyrwhitt's observations are founded on knowledge of printed editions in the 1770s; they did not necessarily resemble those that Leland may have encountered as he searched the libraries of England for antiquities in the 1530s.⁵⁴ Editions by Caxton were valuable from an early stage; it was in the interests of booksellers and collectors to have them bound as separate (and so more valuable) pieces.⁵⁵

The connection between Caxton's Chaucer editions was logical, and in the printer's interest. But it was not all-encompassing—any more than Caxton's ascription of *The Life of Our Lady* or *Boece* was. Other texts printed by Caxton presented the reader with suitable companion pieces for the unattributed *Troilus*. It could be grouped with his prose translations of romances or bound with a verse work such as Caxton's 1478 *Morale prouerbes*, translated by Anthony Woodville, Earl Rivers, from Christine de Pisan's original, whose contents would resonate alongside the proverbially rich *Troilus* and whose female author's aphoristic attitude to female virtue might speak to readers of the story of Criseyde.⁵⁶ As it happens, three of the four complete extant copies of *Troilus* seem to have circulated independently—in the hands of gentlewomen and male and female London merchant-class readers of the early sixteenth century.⁵⁷ The other was bound, probably at the direction of the wealthy London mercer Roger Thorney, in the fifteenth century, with a copy of the 1483 *Tales*, but also with a copy of the 1482–3 *Quattuor sermones* and a manuscript of Lydgate's *Siege of Thebes*.⁵⁸ The reception of copies of *The House of Fame* was likewise varied. A sixteenth-century owner assembled a volume containing *The House of Fame* and *Tales* alongside Caxton's editions of De Pisan's *Morale prouerbes* (1478) and *Fayttes of armes* (1489); *The Curial* (1483); *Lyf of saynt Wenefryde* (1484); *Arte & crafte to knowe well to dye* (1490);

⁵⁴ See John Bale's account of Leland's commission in Leland's *The laborious journey & serche ... for Englandes antiquitees*, 1549 (STC 15445), B8v.

⁵⁵ See Needham, *The Printer and the Pardoner*, 18–19.

⁵⁶ STC 7273; for its later link to Chaucer, see Ch. 3.

⁵⁷ On various gentlewomen named 'Jane Dudley' who may have signed BL C. 11. c. 10, see Gillespie, 'The History of the Book in Britain', 1400–1557, 12. JRL 12005 is signed in an early hand by an 'Elesabeth Blount', perhaps Henry VIII's mistress or a relation (the name also appears on a Gower manuscript, BL Egerton 1991, see Murphy, 'Blount, Elizabeth (c.1500–1539x41)') and also by 'Rycharde paye sitzen & grocer, London', whose will was proved 29 Jan. 1571 (PCC Prob. 11/53). The other near-complete copy is BL G. 11589.

⁵⁸ Oxford, St John's b. 2. 21/266. Mirk's *Sermones* are STC 17957, where they are grouped with Mirk's *Liber festiualis* with which they were sometimes bound. See Needham, *The Printer and the Pardoner*, Appendix B, no. 12 and 67–8 on binding of *Sermones*.

and *Eneydos*.⁵⁹ Two other extant copies survive from *Sammelbände*, but neither of these books contained any other work by Chaucer.⁶⁰ Notes in one suggest the history of its composition; 'R. Johnson', probably the fifteenth-century cleric of that name who left his signature on a number of manuscripts, purchased a selection of books printed by Caxton and De Worde items in 1510, each for a different sum. The higher price for two of these, *Godefrey of Bologne* and the *Fayttes of armes*, suggests they alone were ready-bound, perhaps picked up second hand. They were rebound together with the other items, as much, perhaps, for Johnson's convenience as for the perceived thematic coherence of the *Sammelband* he created.⁶¹

Folio *Sammelbände* containing copies of Caxton's editions invite a range of readings. They register the place of a variety of texts in Caxton's shop and in wider commercial and political contexts—amid 'gentylmen' with access to new books, old books, manuscripts, editions issued by printers overseas, and editions printed by Caxton's successors in the English trade. They are sometimes meaningful when described as books of the author's 'owen makynge', but they remain meaningful when divorced from that context and described as a book of a cleric's, or a citizen's, or a gentlewoman's making. While a producer such as Caxton could anticipate the interests of such diverse readers, respond to new bibliographical contexts, and seek to add value to his book in 'fixed' terms—to locate the book 'here', in his city, in a culture worthy of comparison with the great centres of Europe and yet distinctive, in part because of its tradition of vernacular writing—he *also* depended on the individual and largely irrecoverable whims of his customers to move his products on. The medieval author is involved in this rather chancy process. A printed book will 'flygh forth faste' even as, or perhaps

⁵⁹ These non-Chaucerian items are respectively *STC* 7273; *STC* 7269; *STC* 5057; *STC* 25853; *STC* 789; and *STC* 24796. See Hellinga and Nickson, 'A Caxton Tract-Volume from Thomas Rawlinson's Library', 17–26.

⁶⁰ Vienna, Austrian National Library (ÖNB) Ink. 2. D. 26–8: no sign of independent circulation of items. Contains *House of Fame* with *Quattuor sermones*, 1482–3 (*STC* 17957); *The game and playe of the chesse*, 1483 (*STC* 4921). Needham, *The Printer and the Pardoner*, Appendix B, no. 13.

⁶¹ CUL Inc. 3. J. 1. 1 and CUL Inc. 3. J. 1. 2: *House of Fame* with *Godefrey of Boloigne*, 1481 (*STC* 13175); *Eneydos* (*STC* 24796); *Fayttes of arms* (*STC* 7269); and De Worde's edition of *The chastysing of goddes chylthern*, 1492–3 (*STC* 5065). Needham, *The Printer and the Pardoner*, Appendix B, no. 37; Doyle, 'Books Belonging to R. Johnson'; Wang, 'Caxton's Romances and Their Early Tudor Readers', 182.

because, it recalls and promotes the localized, traditional, authorial, and also inscrutably personal meanings for literary texts.

‘RENEWE BY OPERACION’: BUILDING A CITY AND MAKING NEW BOOKS

The Caxton *Sammelband* owned by Roger Thorney which I mentioned above opens upon a fifteenth-century pen and ink frontispiece, professionally executed in a continental style (see Fig. 5). The woodcut images of the pilgrims that Caxton introduced into the 1483 *Tales* are washed with ink and some have been allocated heraldic shields (as yet unemblazoned, see Fig. 6).⁶² The last item in the book, *The Siege of Thebes*, was made by a commercial scribe who also worked on parts of Camb. Trinity R. 3. 19. There, his hand is found alongside that of a scribe who copied most of Camb. Trinity R. 3. 21, where Thorney’s signature can also be seen.⁶³ In 1483, Caxton chose to stress the similarities between his edition of the *Tales*, authorial holographs, and gentlemen’s manuscripts. Thorney’s book, likewise, looks like one of his other made-to-order manuscript books.⁶⁴

In Caxton and Thorney’s lifetime, English limners—the sort of men who worked on the Thorney *Sammelband*—were beginning to complain that the ‘occupation ys almost destroyed by prynters of bokes’. A bespoke trade in manuscripts and the wealthy customers of that trade routinely afforded books expensive, individuating decorative features. A speculative trade in printed books increasingly did not.⁶⁵ It is

⁶² On the style of the illustration and decoration, see Scott (ed.), *The Mirroure of the Worlde*, 32–3; see also Edwards, ‘Decorated Caxtons’ and on the original woodcuts, Carlson, ‘Woodcut Illustrations of the *Canterbury Tales*, 1483–1602’.

⁶³ Mooney’s Scribe C in ‘Scribes and Booklets of Trinity College, Cambridge, MSS R. 3. 19 and R. 3. 21’, 257; his work is bound with that of Scribe A who copied all of R. 3. 21, barring a brief stint of collaboration with the Hammond-scribe.

⁶⁴ For a list of all his known manuscripts and printed books, see Bone, ‘Extant Manuscripts Printed from by W. De Worde’.

⁶⁵ The quotation is that of Philip Wrenne, *fl.* before 1495: Christianson, *A Directory of London Stationers and Book Artisans, 1300–1500*, 176. On practical reasons for printers not to ‘finish’ all the many books printed in-house and the abandonment of traditions of hand decoration some time after the advent of print, see Smith, *The Title-Page*, 17–19, 36. Like Dr Smith, I do not think that the hand illumination of printed books was meant, in any simple way, to make them ‘look like’ manuscripts: the intention was to make books as they had long been made. But book making was changing. The bespoke decoration of printed books was a tradition on the wane even in Caxton’s time. On the high cost of illumination, see Bell, ‘The Price of Medieval Books in England’, 318–20.

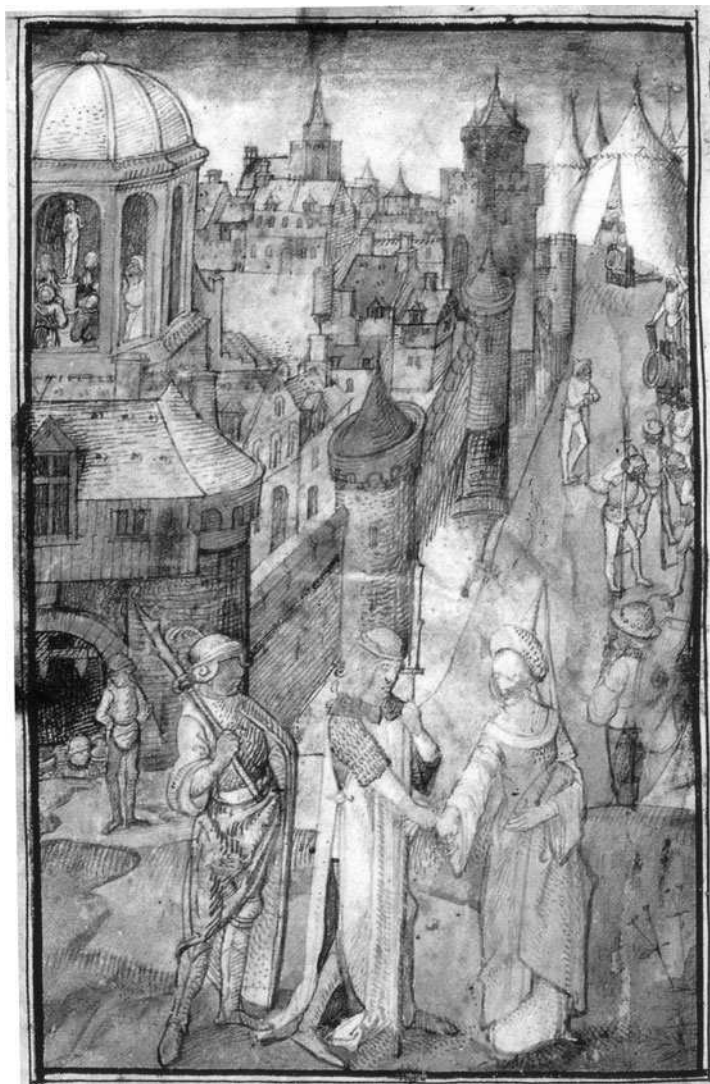


Figure 5. Oxford, St John's College, MS 266/b. 2. 21, frontispiece.
Reproduced with the permission of the President and Fellows of Saint John Baptist College in the University of Oxford.

perhaps of note, then, that the decorator who was employed for the frontispiece for Thorney's book depicts a less changeful terrain than the one that he inhabited. The frontispiece shows a conventional image of a walled medieval city. It unites the book's contents. It is the city of Troy from Chaucer's *Troilus*, the first item in the book, and also, by analogy, Thebes from the stories told by the Knight and by Lydgate later in the *Sammelband*, or even Thorney's own London. All of these could be imagined as bounded and secure spaces, subject to the stable and traditional authority of Church, monarchy, aristocracy, and guild. Added to the pastedown at the back of the book, some ownership marks—Thorney's signature, trademark, and a royal rose (Fig. 7)—describe the book's place in the world in just such graphic and localized terms. 'Roger Thorney mercer of London' was a merchant and citizen of London and also a wealthy, landowning, urban gentleman. He helped plan a monument to Henry VII; he was acquainted with the duke of Suffolk, the earl of Worcester, and the countess of Salisbury; and he was an associate of John Pickering, Caxton's successor as governor of the English nation at Bruges.⁶⁶ His book is evidence, as Caroline Barron argues, of a culture of chivalric display by which late fifteenth-century merchant-class Londoners marked their social affinity with England's gentry and nobility. As gunpowder altered the conditions of battle, as the printing press destroyed the livelihood of artisans, and at a time when merchants, who would never bear arms, could hope for armigerous status (a change evident from the pilgrim portraits in Thorney's book), the London citizenry looked back. They remembered a time when knights protected cities and when stories about them were decorated by hand for the very best sort of men.⁶⁷

On one level, then, the forms of Thorney's book are nostalgic; on another, interdependent level, they denote change. The rose that accompanies Thorney's signature could be the white rose of York. Another book he signed, the commercially produced manuscript miscellany Camb. Trinity R. 3. 21, contains poems and textual additions in support of the Yorkist cause.⁶⁸ If it were drawn after 1485 and the Battle of Bosworth, however, Thorney's rose may equally be that of the new Tudor monarchy—an image awkwardly rendered by a clumsy pen and

⁶⁶ Bone, 'Extant Manuscripts Printed from by W. de Worde', 296–301.

⁶⁷ Barron, 'Chivalry, Pageantry and Merchant Culture in Medieval London'.

⁶⁸ Bone, 'Extant Manuscripts Printed from by W. de Worde', 297; see also Mooney, 'Scribes and Booklets of Trinity College, Cambridge, MSS R. 3. 19 and R. 3. 21'.

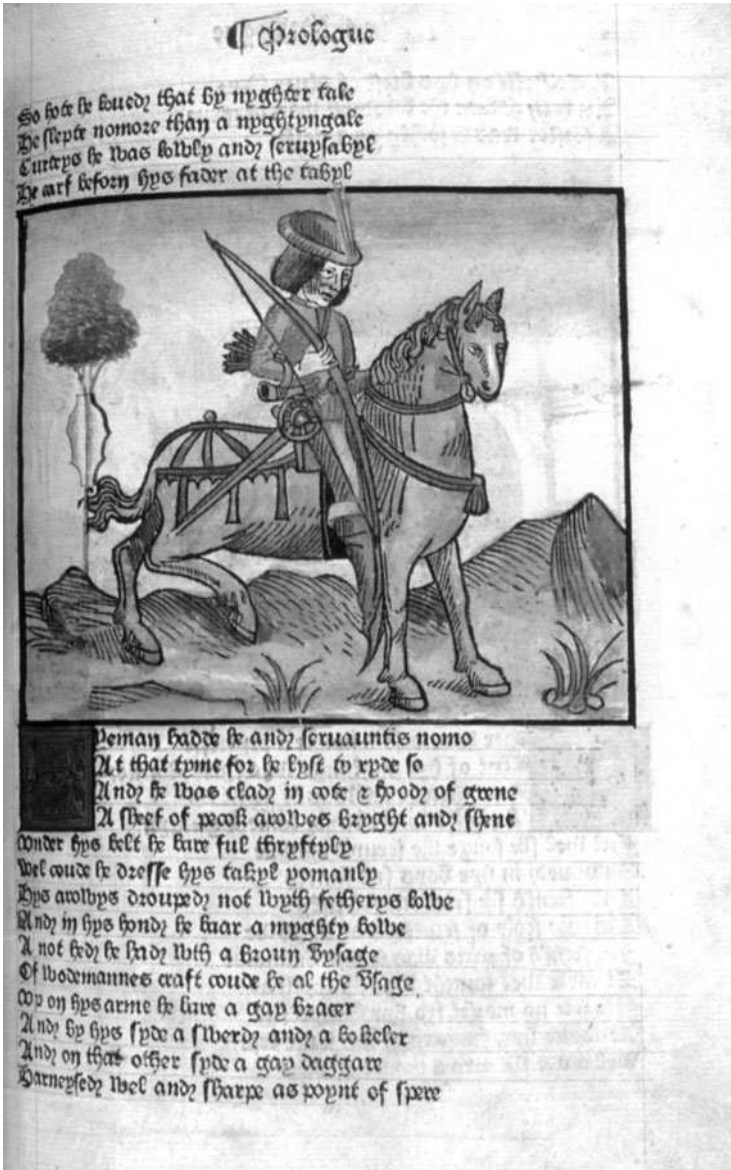


Figure 6. Oxford, St John's College, b. 2. 21: Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (printed by William Caxton, 1483), STC 5083, A5r. Reproduced with the permission of the President and Fellows of Saint John Baptist College in the University of Oxford.

made awkward by this London citizen's fractious political moment.⁶⁹ In his depiction of his multiple social affiliations, as in fifteenth-century London itself, the boundaries of Thorney's world overlap, just as, in his *Sammelband*, the work of the printing press (a copy of each of Caxton's 1483 *Troilus* and *Tales* and the 1482–3 *Sermones* of John Mirk) merges with that of scribes and limners.

Thorney's *Sammelband* is not merely a collection of chivalric texts by medieval authors, decorated by artisans at the end of an era of bespoke book production. It is also a collection of London texts—of *Canterbury Tales*, where London is 'oure'—the pilgrims'—'citee' (l. 4365); of *Troilus*, where an ancient city's walls stand over a shadowy English 'Troynovant'. This London is not an ennobled space, but, as Marion Turner, Sylvia Federico, and David Wallace have argued, a space for tangled hierarchies and fractured affiliations, revelry and violent outbursts, civil warfare, and social divisions too wide for the languages that attempt to contain them.⁷⁰ In the 'Troynovant' foreshadowed by *Troilus*, a stable urban polity gives way to betrayal and ruin. The city as Lydgate envisages it in *The Siege of Thebes*—and, as Sheila Lindenbaum has argued so persuasively, as many Londoners envisaged it in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries—is besieged, suffering, failed by, and yet complicit in, the unchecked belligerence of its aristocratic leadership.⁷¹ This is Thorney's city: a place where citizens, like medieval authors, see divisions and problems in the worlds to which they belong.

This is also, I would argue, the city of the frontispiece to Thorney's *Sammelband*. There, Troy is much like the city depicted by Chaucer in *Troilus*; it is walled but not secure. An army camped just beyond its confines makes ready to lay siege and in the foreground a lady extends her arm and a token (that looks to me like a glove but may be her sleeve) to her knight. As she does so she turns away from her love and the city gate and towards the enemy camp. Her gesture may be coy, but at the front of Thorney's book, as an illustration of the text of *Troilus* that immediately follows, and of the connected narratives of

⁶⁹ Anglo, *Spectacle, Pageantry, and Early Tudor Policy*, 36–7, on early use of the Tudor rose.

⁷⁰ Wallace, 'Chaucer and the Absent City'; Turner, '*Troilus and Criseyde* and the "Treasonous Aldermen" of 1382'; Federico, 'A Fourteenth-Century Erotics of Politics', esp. 121–9 on the ambiguity—the implicit narrative of sexual treachery—in the fourteenth-century idea of London as 'New Troy'.

⁷¹ 'London Texts and Literate Practice', esp. 300: she writes that between 1450 and 1471, London was in a 'practically continuous state of siege'. See also Simpson, "Dysemol Daies and Fatal Houres".

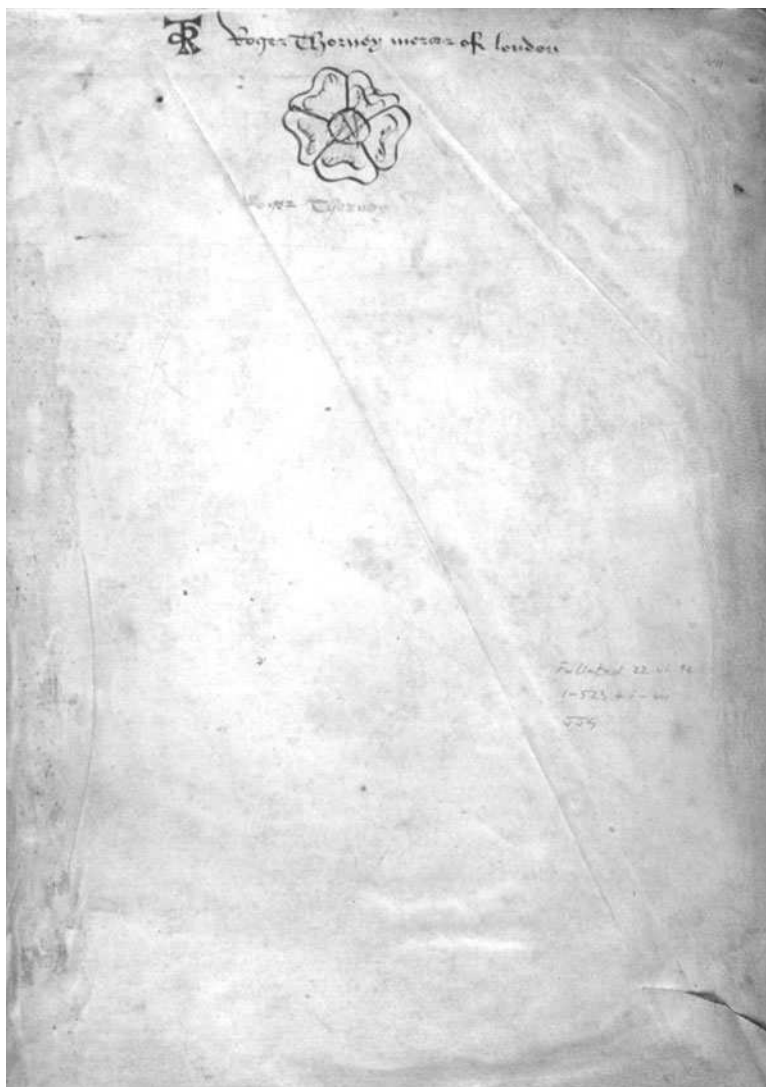


Figure 7. Oxford, St John's College, MS 266/b. 2. 21, back pastedown. Reproduced with the permission of the President and Fellows of Saint John Baptist College in the University of Oxford.

'blood Thebane' (*Troilus*, v. 601) in *The Knight's Tale* and *The Siege of Thebes*, it is prescient. Criseyde will be forced to leave her people for the Greek encampment. She will betray Troilus in favour of Diomedes, let her Greek lover take her glove and 'a pencil of hire sleve' (*Troilus*, v. 1043). In the frontispiece, her transgressive actions take place just outside of the walled city, but their effects ripple back in time and space to where, behind those walls, the citizenry are implicated in her treason. In the frontispiece, they gather in prayer before a shrine to the statue of a naked female deity. In doing so they supply the context for Troilus's infatuation and his betrayal of the more pressing concerns of his nation in favour of love; it is in the context of the Trojans' communal rites, at one of their festivals for Pallas, that Troilus sees his lady and the fatal events of the poem are presaged. Thorney's book articulates what I describe as the 'localized, traditional' values (tales of cities and their noble inhabitants) that may be drawn from, or applied to, texts and books, but it does so in such a way as to suggest that these values, like the walls of Troy or Thebes, the love of Criseyde, and even the traditional 'occupation' of the limner, are unlikely to hold.

Roger Thorney lived to see Caxton's foreman, Wynkyn de Worde, take over the business of his employer. He lived, too, in a time when the press made it possible to make something new out of old books and old stories of declining feudal and unstable civic structures and in which this—the press's capacity to renew—might be a way to promote a book. In his 1495 edition of Trevisa's *Policronicon*, De Worde says that Thorney

/hath exhorted
Wynken de worde / of vertuous entent
Well to correcte, and greatly hym comforted
This specyall boke / to make and sette in prent.

So might we, the readers,

Take hede of castellys / and of towres hye
They falle for lacke / of reparacion
So done these bokes / when we lyst not applye
Theym to renewe / by operacion.

(STC 13439, A1v)

De Worde here asks the reader to recognize the London of Lydgate and Chaucer's texts and Thorney's *Sammelband*. The very places from which one might stand and map this city, define and secure its social

hierarchies—the privileged vantage point offered by traditional strongholds of the nobility, their towers and castles—are crumbling. However, De Worde suggests that the printing press can do what the decorators of Thorney's book (or their patron, or whoever directed them) chose not to do in this circumstance. It can repair some of the cracks in the city walls. The 'specyall' terms of feudal service by which De Worde, like Caxton before him, defines his relationship with his patron, by which he mimics the declining tradition of bespoke book production, are terms matched by his account of the special 'operacion' of the press.

In c.1494 someone—presumably Thorney—turned the Thorney *Sammelband* back over to De Worde's printing operation. It was apparently in that year and in De Worde's premises that the manuscript copy of *The Siege of Thebes* was marked up as copy text for a quarto printed edition.⁷² De Worde's c.1494 *Siege* occupies an interesting space between old ways of valuing texts—values that 'falle for lacke / of reparation'—and the profitability and accessibility of the printed book. I have already argued that copies of quarto editions were worth less than their scribal analogues. The woodcut images that De Worde used to decorate the recto and verso of the first folio, meanwhile, circumvent the need for the limner's craft. But compromises between old and new are also reached in De Worde's *Siege*. Castles and towers, knights and ladies, need not fall or be forgotten in the midst of innovation. The woodcut image on A1r of the c.1494 *Siege* is of a knight. The same woodcut was made for Caxton's image of the Knight who tells a story of Thebes in *The Canterbury Tales*. On A1v, as in the Thorney *Sammelband*, there is an image of a city, in this case the 'Ryall cite' (see Fig. 8). As depicted in the woodcut, Thebes is no longer under attack and nor is it witness to the transgressive behaviour of lovestruck knights, faithless ladies, or idolatrous citizens. It is a site instead for the productive labour imagined by De Worde in the verses in the *Policronicon*. The traditional hierarchies of a chivalric culture are celebrated: a knight defeats an encroaching dragon; Amphion, king of Thebes, unites his people by his harmonious harp playing as he does in the opening of Lydgate's text. Amphion's people, meanwhile, do what De Worde suggests they should. They 'renewe' the walls of Thebes, build rather than betray their city, secure its terrain by

⁷² See Gillespie, "'Folowyng the trace of mayster Caxton'", for reasons to assume the manuscript was first copied for Thorney to match his Caxtons and later supplied to De Worde. The printed edition is STC 17031, IMEV 3928.

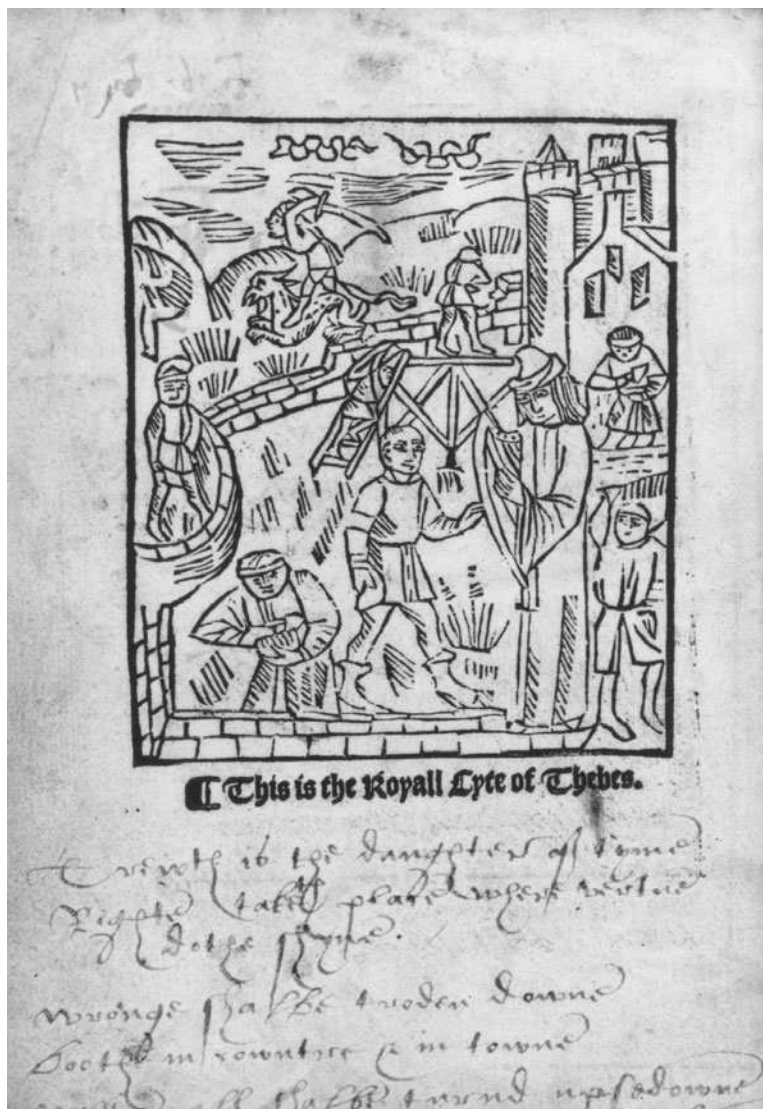


Figure 8. London, British Library, C. 13. a. 21 (1): Lydgate's *Siege of Thebes* (printed by Wynkyn de Worde, c.1494), STC 17031, A1v. Reproduced with the permission of the British Library.

their craft and skill. Thebes may ultimately be doomed, but De Worde's book opens with an account of the values for, and by which, it was raised.

There is an analogy to be drawn between De Worde's depiction of Thebes and the promotion of English writers in early printed books. In both cases, something familiar and something recognizably a part of an English literary tradition (a noble city, a famous author) is made to seem stable, rather than fractured or problematic, as it is employed to promote a printed literary text. There is also an analogy to be drawn with the way that De Worde built upon the books and the business he inherited from Caxton.⁷³ It was he, not Caxton, who first made extensive and elaborate use of woodcuts in English books. In the place of manuscript miniatures, these and other decorative features of printed books serve as a new *ordinatio* for the medieval page. They guide the reader's eye to or across textual divisions and act as aides-mémoires.⁷⁴ The woodcut on A1r of *The Siege* represents another of De Worde's early experiments with aids to both reader and book producer—a title-page. Together with the final colophons or imprints that came, in De Worde's time, to be a standard feature of printed books, title-pages marked out the front and back of copies of editions. They assisted those whose job it was to collate or bind large numbers of books and facilitated distribution to wholesalers, retailers, binders, and customers, who could enter information from title-pages into day-books or stock or library lists. Title-pages had a promotional as well as organizational function. They drew the attention of customers to a book and provided a visually pleasing précis of its contents.⁷⁵ In De Worde's time it became common for title-pages and imprints to carry some impression of the sign of a printer's shop—usually incorporated in an image known as a printer's 'device'. The c.1494 *Siege* ends with one such device, originally used by Caxton and taken over by De Worde in the 1490s while he ran his business out of Caxton's old premises.⁷⁶ The device brands the

⁷³ See Hellinga, 'Tradition and Renewal' for useful discussion of De Worde's 1490s operations.

⁷⁴ The pragmatic, including mnemonic, use of *mise-en-page* and decoration is often described: see for instance Parkes, 'The Influence of the Concepts of *Ordinatio* and *Compilatio* on the Development of the Book'; Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, ch. 7.

⁷⁵ See Smith, *The Title-Page*, esp. 15–23, and Driver, *The Image in Print*, ch. 3.

⁷⁶ McKerrow, *Printers' & Publishers' Devices in England and Scotland, 1485–1640*, Caxton no. 2.

printer's products and identifies his place of work for loyal or prospective customers.⁷⁷

In De Worde's shop, the book is thus a vehicle for conventional ways of thinking about texts, and then for something more—for an innovative account of a book and its content. Lydgate writes in *The Siege of Thebes* that his *auctor*

was old er the siegë gan,
The which in soth shortyd hath his dayes.
· · · · ·
For of his lordys / alyvë was not on
But slayn at Thebes /, æ knowën al the cas.
(ll. 4613–19)

De Worde's book predicts something other than ruin and despair and the failure of the clerical adviser (whether dead *auctor* or English translator) to save 'his lordys'. It is self-evidentially the work of a profiteering printer who hopes, as that author here cannot, that some new good can be made of the story of Thebes.

Only one copy of the c.1494 *Siege* is extant. It too survives from a *Sammelband*. It was bound with copies of two other quarto editions that came off De Worde's press at about this time, *The Assembly of Gods* (c.1494) and *The Temple of Glas* (1493).⁷⁸ The books were together by 1558 at the latest, when a Richard Fisher or 'Fyssher' signed several items.⁷⁹ Both the latter works were ascribed to Lydgate in near-contemporary sources but here, like *The Siege*, they are printed without any paratextual attribution.⁸⁰ De Worde suggests a link between *The Siege* and *The Assembly* by printing the same image of a knight on A1r of each. One early owner took the cue and identified both figures as '(A)Edipus' in handwritten captions (so that the title-page for *The Assembly* becomes a kind of frame for *The Siege*).⁸¹ The much more

⁷⁷ See Smith, *The Title-Page*, 92–7, and the useful discussion on devices and their relation to shop signs and other promotional strategies in Wang, 'The Image of St George and the Dragon'.

⁷⁸ STC 17007, IMEV 4005; STC 17032a, IMEV 851.

⁷⁹ BL C. 13. a. 21 (1–3). A cursory survey of will indexes shows more than ten men by this name in England alive in the 1550s.

⁸⁰ *The Temple of Glas* is ascribed in manuscript, BL Add. 16165; *The Assembly* is ascribed by De Worde in print in 1498 (see below).

⁸¹ See Gillespie, "'Folowyng the trace of mayster Caxton'", figs. 5.7–8.

stable link between these texts and *The Temple of Glas*—Lydgate's putative authorship—is asserted by neither De Worde nor any early owner of the book. The most obvious reason for a reader to make a single volume out of these three texts is instead a new, commercial reason also evident in Caxton's more carefully ascribed folio editions—the ready availability of multiple copies of these books to customers c.1494.

AUTHORS 'IN HEAUVEN WON'

De Worde's c.1494 editions are, broadly speaking, framed more tidily than comparable scribal booklets or the quarto editions of short poems printed by Caxton in 1476–7. Value is conferred upon them by images of cities and of valiant knights. All of them bear one of the printer's devices. But the printer's promotional techniques were not inflexible: De Worde perhaps meant to offer his customers a selection of Lydgate's texts, but the author's name is nowhere used to propose this meaning for the products of his press. The importance of the c.1494 Lydgate editions to his operation is better understood in commercial than literary terms. They are evidence that De Worde, like his predecessor Caxton, envisaged more than one way to move his products 'forth faste for the nones'.

De Worde produced many other quarto editions of verse that could be ascribed to Lydgate, some in c.1494 and more over the coming decades. His editions of *The Horse, Goose, and Sheep* (c.1494, c.1497–8, 1500);⁸² *The Churl and the Bird* (c.1494, 1510?);⁸³ *Stans Puer ad Mensam* (1510?, c.1520);⁸⁴ *Gouernayle of helthe* (1506?, 1530?);⁸⁵ *A treatyse of a galaunt* (1510?, 1520?, and two in 1521?);⁸⁶ *The smith that forged him a new*

⁸² STC 17020–2, IMEV 658, with 'The worlde so wyde', IMEV 3504; 'Tied with a Line', IMEV 3437; lists of collective nouns.

⁸³ STC 17011–12, IMEV 2784. The first surviving reprint from Caxton's edition is that of Pynson, STC 17010, 1493; the book was reprinted in Canterbury by John Mychell, 1534?, STC 17013 (on whom see Ch. 4).

⁸⁴ STC 17030.5–0.7, IMEV 2233 with IMEV 3074; 4137; 4181 ('Salve Regina'; 'Who-so off Welth'; 'Sensus Miratur'); the book was reprinted by John Redman 1534–6? with *The Book of Curtesye*, IMEV 1919 (STC 17030.9).

⁸⁵ STC 12139–9.5, the prose treatise and Lydgate's *Dietary*, IMEV 824.

⁸⁶ STC 24240–2.3, IMEV 1874. STC 24242 was printed by John Skot for De Worde. The text was ascribed to Lydgate by Bishop John Alcock in sermon, printed by De Worde, STC 284, 1497? (see D7v) (Boffey, 'The Treatise of a Galaunt in Manuscript and Print').

dame (c.1505);⁸⁷ and *The Complaint of the Black Knight* (1531?);⁸⁸ and his quarto reprints of the c.1494 *Assembly of Gods* (1499–1500);⁸⁹ and 1493 *Temple of Glas* (1499–1500, 1506?);⁹⁰ are mostly illustrated, have title pages, and typically end with detailed imprints or devices. Many of them were reprinted by competitors and successors—Pynson before 1530; Robert Redman and Thomas Berthelet in the early 1530s; John Mychell (in Canterbury) and John Redman (in Southwark) in the mid-1530s; William Copland in the 1560s.

Neither De Worde nor any other printer made an effort to ascribe these little books to an author. However, De Worde did leave evidence of some other ways of promoting the work of his press. The content of several anonymous Lydgate quarto editions (*The Horse, Goose, and Sheep*, for instance) is broadly that of Christian allegory. Two other Lydgate texts printed by De Worde in quarto, *The Court of Sapience* (1510),⁹¹ and *The Virtues of the Mass* (1501 and 1520?),⁹² stress such content by the inclusion of the sort of woodcut images—of the saints in glory and of the sacrament of the Eucharist—that are to be found in all the devotional books that De Worde industriously produced at this time. Like small illustrated *Horae* in which vernacular items were often printed (including an octavo printed 1521? by Richard Faques with Lydgate's *Daunce of Machabree*;⁹³ and a quarto printed by De Worde in 1513 with Lydgate's *Calendar*⁹⁴) such editions suggest that the demand for vernacular devotional material evident in the production of fifteenth-century English manuscripts was quick to accommodate the work of

⁸⁷ STC 22653.5, IMEV 978, also printed by Pynson, c.1510 and William Copland, 1565?, STC 22653.7–3.9 (on whom see Ch. 5). The text was ascribed to Lydgate by John Bale in his *Catalogus* printed in Basle, 1557–9.

⁸⁸ STC 17014.7, IMEV 1507. Previously printed from a different witness in Edinburgh by Chepman and Myllar, 1508, STC 17014.3 (ascribed there to Chaucer), with 'An Envoy to the Blessed Virgin', IMEV 2579.5.

⁸⁹ STC 17006, IMEV 4005. It was also reprinted by Pynson, c.1505 and by Skot for Redman, after 1529, STC 17007.5 and 17007a.

⁹⁰ STC 17033 and 17033.7, IMEV 851. Pynson reprinted the text in 1503, STC 17033.3. Berthelet's version of 1529? is newly edited, the language modernized, STC 17034.

⁹¹ STC 17016, IMEV 3406 and devotional prose lists. The woodcut is Hodnett, *English Woodcuts, 1480–1535*, no. 538, who lists ten other devotional De Worde quartos using the image in the same decade.

⁹² STC 17037.5–8, IMEV 4246. The woodcut is Hodnett, *English Woodcuts, 1480–1535*, no. 496, also used in 1505? in *Crafte to lyue well* (STC 792).

⁹³ STC 15932, containing the hours and *Daunce*, IMEV 2591.

⁹⁴ STC 15914, containing the hours and *Calendar*, IMEV 1721.

the press. De Worde sometimes deployed pious authors to promote this material. On occasion his editions ascribe printed devotional material to medieval writers: Richard Rolle, Walter Hilton, Margery Kempe, and members of the community at Syon that was a sometime patron of De Worde's press.⁹⁵ But most of De Worde's illustrated religious books are anonymous. Their sale, like the sale of thousands of images of pity issued from English and continental presses at this time, depended not on authors but upon an established—and as De Worde detected, rather bookish—culture of vernacular and visual piety.⁹⁶

Lydgate's identity is peripheral to the promotion of his religious texts in De Worde and his competitor's quarto editions: he is there in an internal attribution in the only complete copy of *The Virtues of the Mass* (1520?, A4r), otherwise he is missing. Medieval authors anticipated just such treatment of their work; indeed they promoted it. At his ending in *The Canterbury Tales*, the penitent author Chaucer searches through his life's works and dictates which of these we should read as praise of God and which were done in vain, despite the author's good 'entente'. He means that he should be 'oon of hem at the day of doom that shulle be saved' (x. 1083, 1092). The result is a richly suggestive model for the more pronounced promotion of some of De Worde and his contemporaries' books in instances where this was deemed necessary (as it was not in most of De Worde's quartos). Chaucer's Retraction may, as I suggested at the end of the last chapter, be a little disingenuous, an immodest advertisement of his writings. It may even be an authorial or spurious text appended improperly to the *Tales* by a scribe.⁹⁷ But it is clear that only a few of the stories told by Chaucer's pilgrims, or any of the texts linked to the author, may be redeemed as 'legendes seintes' or 'omelies' (x. 1088). The redemptive framework described by Chaucer is a package for, rather than a close account of, Chaucerian writing, one that predicts possible responses to Chaucer's texts, including De Worde's response when it was his turn to package *The Canterbury Tales*

⁹⁵ For instance, 'Rycharde Rolle' is named as 'hermyte of Hampull' on the title page to his *Contemplacions* printed by De Worde in 1506 (STC 21259). See Keiser, 'The Mystics and the Early English Printers', and Rhodes, 'Syon Abbey and Its Religious Publications in the Sixteenth Century'.

⁹⁶ See Vincent Gillespie, 'Vernacular Books of Religion'; Erler, 'Devotional Literature'; Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, 77–87. On illustration of these books, see Driver, 'Pictures in Print', chs. 2–4.

⁹⁷ Sayce, 'Chaucer's "Retractions"', has a useful summary.

in 1498, and when, in the same year, he chose to print a folio rather than quarto edition of Lydgate's *Assembly of Gods*.⁹⁸

The 1498 *Tales* can be usefully set against all the little quartos of vernacular verse, religious and secular, printed by De Worde in this and succeeding decades. As a large folio edition containing almost 80 sheets, it was a relatively expensive undertaking: much more so than the quartos just described, most of which were compiled from just a few sheets. It was undertaken at a time when large books of tales from Canterbury were widely available to customers: in manuscript, in two editions printed by Caxton, and in an edition by Richard Pynson of 1492.⁹⁹ The last of these books is worth considering before I describe De Worde's edition. Pynson's is a reasonably close reproduction of Caxton's 1483 text, excepting the printer's decision to leave off Chaucer's Retraction. Pynson's did so perhaps because his copy text was damaged or incomplete, but the omission of his 'last words' was a recognizable alteration to Chaucer's *Tales*. One early owner of a copy of Pynson's edition, a chaplain from Bury St Edmunds called Robert Saham, was sufficiently concerned about the missing text to copy it out in full from Caxton's 1483 edition, before transforming Chaucer's prayer into a plea to commend his own soul to Christ: 'Qui cum patre & spiritu sancto uiuit & regnat Deus per omnia secula seculorum Amen quod Saham.'¹⁰⁰ After Saham's death, the executor of his estate, a parson from the town of Finningham, twelve miles from Bury, recalled the book in precisely the chaplain's preferred terms:

Who soo euyr on thys boke do rede
remembyr Saham pryst of bury town
weche mad executor Jhesu do hym mede
hys goodys to spende with good deuocyon
Robert Stylyard' parson of ffynnyngham
weche gaff thys boke to Ele lee to pray
ffor the seyd Saham sumtyme when she may.

(A2v)

'Ele lee' was probably the wife or a relation of Edmund Lee, Esquire, who appointed a 'Stelyard' as his own executor in 1535, and who

⁹⁸ STC 5085, IMEV 4019; STC 17005, IMEV 4005.

⁹⁹ Pynson's edition is STC 5084, IMEV 4019 with the Retraction.

¹⁰⁰ The book is JRL 10002: Saham's will, Archdeaconry of Sudbury, Prob. R2/6/62, was proved 1519 where he is described as a chaplain living in Bury.

left a will bequeathing all his books to his servant, Thomas Smith, and stating his wish to be buried next to his unnamed spouse 'in the monastery of Seynt Edmund'.¹⁰¹ The next owner appears to have been a husbandman (farmer) from Buxhall, a town just south of Finningham and Bury.¹⁰² Saham's book registers its value less as a collection of texts (or one of a number of 'goodys to spende') than as a memorial collection of prayers for those who own goods and hope to do good with them. This value has not been fixed by Pynson's press; it has been added to the book by a succession of consumers, whose ongoing intervention in the passage of the text is imagined by Stelyard as he addresses [w]ho soo euyr on thys boke do rede'.

I suggested in Chapter 1 that this is precisely the sort of response to the vagaries of textual transmission—the movement of books from Pynson's shop in St Clement to the towns of East Anglia, to gentlemen and women, parsons and chaplains, servants and husbandmen—that undermines any notion of a singular authority or meaning for Chaucer's book and that elicits the author's careful abnegation of responsibility for his texts in the Retraction. It may also inform our understanding of De Worde's efforts to 'renewe' and fix the meaning of the *Tales* in 1498. He did so in ways that would have made sense to Saham, Stelyard, and those of their associates for whom book ownership was an outward expression of piety as well as a display of literary taste, wealth, and kinship. He did so precisely because a number of other editions of Chaucer's text were available to those readers. De Worde's folio *Tales* is a new and improved book. Satoko Tokunaga has demonstrated that he made use of manuscripts as well as printed witnesses to produce a conflated text from an imperfect copy of Caxton's corrected edition of 1483.¹⁰³ De Worde also provided Chaucer's work with its first title-page. The blank leaf A1 in Caxton and Pynson's editions is filled in: 'The boke of Chaucer named Caunterbury tales' (A1r, Fig. 9). Finally, De Worde made the book a prayer for the author 'of whoos soule Criste haue mercy' after the Retraction, having already added the subscription 'By William Caxton His soule in heuen won' to his reprint of Caxton's 1483 prologue to the *Tales* (A2v).

¹⁰¹ Tymms (ed.), *Wills and Inventories ... of Bury St. Edmunds and the Archdeacon of Sudbury*, 125–7.

¹⁰² On the leaf before Saham's addition is the inscription: 'robartus maykin est verus possessor huius libri teste Iohanne Smythe'; a Robert Mayken was a husbandman in Buxhall, his will proved 1557, Archdeaconry of Sudbury, Prob. R2/26/213.

¹⁰³ Tokunaga, 'The Sources of Wynkyn de Worde's Version of "The Monk's Tale" '.

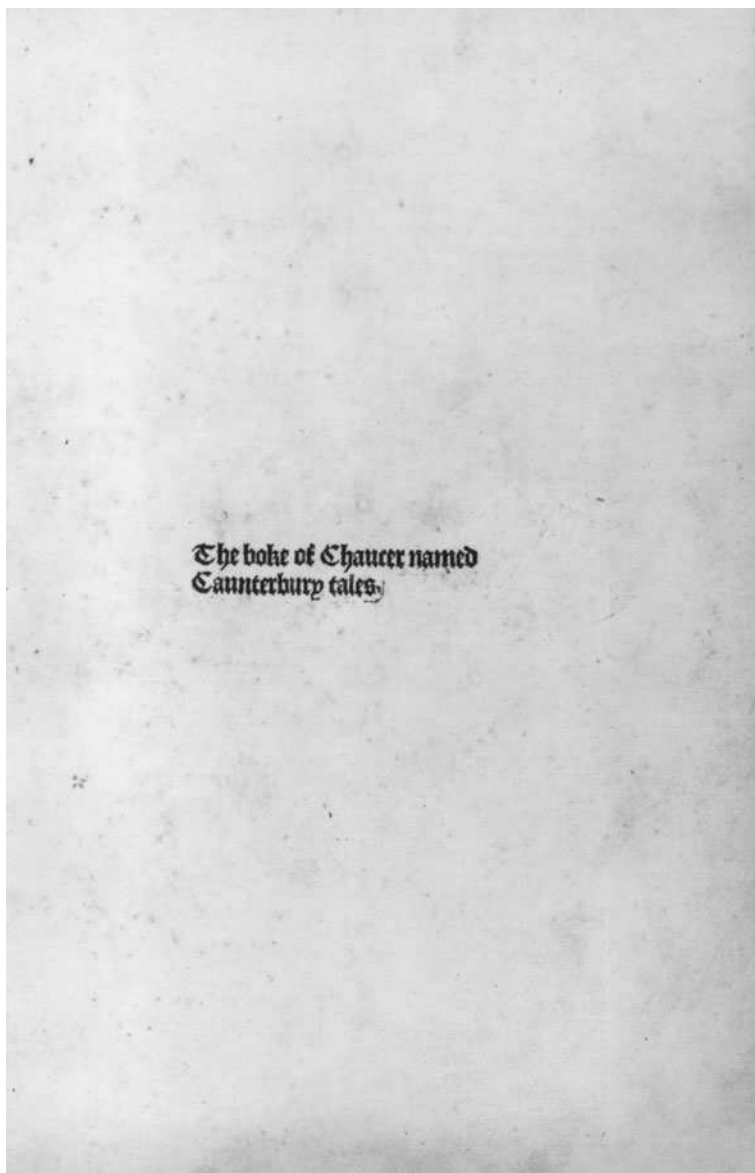


Figure 9. London, British Library, G. 11587 (1): Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (printed by Wynkyn de Worde, 1498), *STC* 5085, A1r. Reproduced with the permission of the British Library.

De Worde's book is offered, that is, as one of the sort of 'goodys' a customer might 'spende with good deuocyon'. Like the Anglian owners of the copy of Pynson's edition, the printer promotes orthodox Christian meanings for Chaucer's text. In the British and Pierpont Morgan Libraries, copies of the 1498 edition are bound with the 1498 *Assembly of Gods*.¹⁰⁴ This is the first evidence we have of Chaucer and Lydgate poems marketed as part of trade *Sammelbände*: in books that De Worde or another retailer either promoted consistently together or had ready-bound. The choice of companion volume for the *Tales* is a part of a more coherent pre-packaging of literary experience than Caxton ever attempted for such texts.¹⁰⁵ De Worde's coordinated marketing effort begins with the woodcut illustration on A3v of the *Tales* (Fig. 10) and A1r, in place of a title-page, in *The Assembly* (Fig. 11). The woodcut is a copy of one Caxton had made for his second edition of the *Tales*. It shows a group of pilgrims at a table at the beginning of the 1498 *Tales*. At the beginning of *The Assembly*, it may instead be taken for a gathering of the text's eponymous gods, whose names are tabulated immediately below.¹⁰⁶ They are the pagan subjects of half of the dream vision that follows, in which the dreamer witnesses an allegorical struggle between vice and virtue. The gods send Vice to war after Attropos, a figure for death, arrives at their assembly and announces a breach of contract. The pagan deities he addresses, he says, assigned him a 'seelyd ... patent, | Gevyng me full power' to strike down any mortal man.¹⁰⁷ One—Virtue—still stands. The words of the agreement between the gods and Attropos fail before God's Word, Christ, 'Lorde of Lyght' (l. 1390) and the very fabric of social order seems to fail with them: 'do ye nat as goddys' says Attropos, '[f]or a goddes wrytyng may nat reversyd be' (ll. 491–4). If order is to be reimposed, it must be by further reversals. The language of

¹⁰⁴ BL G. 11587 (1–2); New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, 737.1–2. A copy of *The Assembly*, Huntington 32073, is separate in a nineteenth-century binding. The separate copy of the 1498 *Canterbury Tales* in the Folger Shakespeare Library shows no signs of having been bound with another item. I have yet to examine that in the University of Illinois.

¹⁰⁵ See Gillespie, 'Poets, Printers, and Early English *Sammelbände*' for closer definition of trade *Sammelbände*.

¹⁰⁶ Hodnett, *English Woodcuts, 1480–1535*, no. 2371.

¹⁰⁷ Quotations are from Chance (ed.), *The Assembly of the Gods*, ll. 449–50.

Bakbyters, glosers, and fayre flaterers,
Malycious murmurers with grete claterers,
Tregetours, tryphelers, feyners of tales

(ll. 683–5)

and hundreds of other sinners named by the poet must be superseded by all the words that he can dredge from his vocabulary for Christian goodness. The struggle that he witnesses must also be renamed; it is a battle over the dreamer's soul, the essence of his temporal experience, his life,

Whyche ys callyd propurly the Tyme of Pylgremage
Aftyr som, and som name hit otherwyse,
And call hyt the Tyme of Daungerous Passage,
And som, Tyme of Were.

(ll. 1779–82)

It is the figure of Doctrine in *The Assembly of Gods* (just as it is 'doctrine' in Chaucer's Retraction) who explains to the dreamer that this is the proper name for his vision, and thus an irreversible meaning for 'al that is writen' (*The Canterbury Tales*, x. 1083). Doctrine immediately directs the dreamer/reader to '[r]emember hit well and prynte hit in thy mynde' (l. 1784). She gestures to an engraved figure of pilgrimage on the wall, to medieval figures for memory, to this range of meanings for the word 'prynte'. In De Worde's printed edition, however, her imperative acquires a new resonance. An allegory which is figured forth in 'prynte'—or any text, even those tales of Canterbury pilgrims that 'sownen into synne' (x. 1086)—may be capable of conveying ideas useful, even essential, to the reader's struggle for salvation.

The reader is left in no doubt, meanwhile, as to the side on which the medieval author is enlisted in the struggle for the meaning of this book and the soul of its reader. The copy-text first used by De Worde for the c.1494 edition of *The Assembly* was Camb. Trinity R. 3. 19, a manuscript copied by commercial scribes (described above in Chapter 1) including a scribe who made another book owned by De Worde's patron Thorney. It is anonymous, as is the c.1494 edition. But when De Worde came, in 1498, to produce a folio edition to match his new version of *The Canterbury Tales*, he deemed it worth investing some effort to make the text a tribute to an English writer, as well as a riposte to Chaucerian

Prologus



A knyghte there was a worthy man
 That fro the tyme þe fyrst began
 To ryde out he lonyd chivalrye
 Trouthe & honour freedom & curtesye
 Full worthy he was in his lordys werre
 And thereto had he ryden no man ferre
 And as wel in cistendom as in hethenelle
 And euer had honour for his worthynelle
 At alisaundre he was whan it was wonne
 Full oft tyme he had the bounde begonne
 Abouey all nacouns in prync
 In letow had he repled & in rule
 No cytyen man so ofter tymes as he
 In garnade at the lyge also had he be
 At algeyer and ryden in belmarie
 At lepyr was he & also at fatalie
 Whan they were wonne & in the grete see
 At many a noble armie had he be
 At mortall bataylles had he be fyftene

And fought for our fapth at tiamysene
 In lytis thyres and ap slayn his foo
 This plite worthy knyght had be also
 Somtyme wpyth the lord of palathye
 Agayn a nother hethen man in turtre
 And euermore he had a souereyne prys
 And though he was worthy he was wps
 And of his port as meche as a mayde
 Neuer yet noo bylanye he layde
 In all his lyf vnto no maner wyght
 He was a very gentyll perfyght knyght
 For to tell you of his arap
 His hors were good but he was not gap
 Of fustyan he ware a gypcion
 All belmyred wpyth his handbergeon
 For he was late come fro his vyage
 And sent for to do his pylgrymage

Figure 10. London, British Library, G. 11587 (1): Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (printed by Wynkyn de Worde, 1498), STC 5085, A3v. Reproduced with the permission of the British Library.



Ther foloweth the Interpretaciō of the names of goddis and goddesses of this
treastyte folowynge as poetes wyte.

☿ Phebus is as moche to saye	as the sonne Cupido	god of loue
☼ Appollo is the same	or ellys god of lychte ☿ thea	goddesse of wysdom
♄ Jovis	Jherer of diemys fortune	the variant goddelle
♃ Pluto	god of helle Pan	god of shepherdes
♅ Jynus	Juge of helle Jlys	goddesse of frute
♁ Cerberus	porter of helle Neptuneus	god of the see
♄ Solus	the wynde or god of the ayre Jynene	goddelle of the batayll or of haruest
♃ Diana	goddelle of wode and chace Bacchus	god of wyne
☿ Phebe	the mone or goddelle of waters Mercurius	god of langage
♀ Aurora	goddelle of the mornynge or the spyn Venus	goddelle of loue
☿ Jynus of the daye	Disorde	goddelle of debate & styfe
♂ Mars	god of bataylle Atropos	dethe
♃ Jupiter	god of wysdom	
♀ Juno	goddelle of ryche	
♃ Saturne	god of colde of goddis and goddesses as is rehercyd in thys	
♁ Ceres	goddelle of come treastyte folowynge.	

A i

Figure 11. London, British Library, G. 11587 (2): *The Assembly of Gods* (printed by Wynkyn de Worde, 1498), STC 17005, A1r. Reproduced with the permission of the British Library.

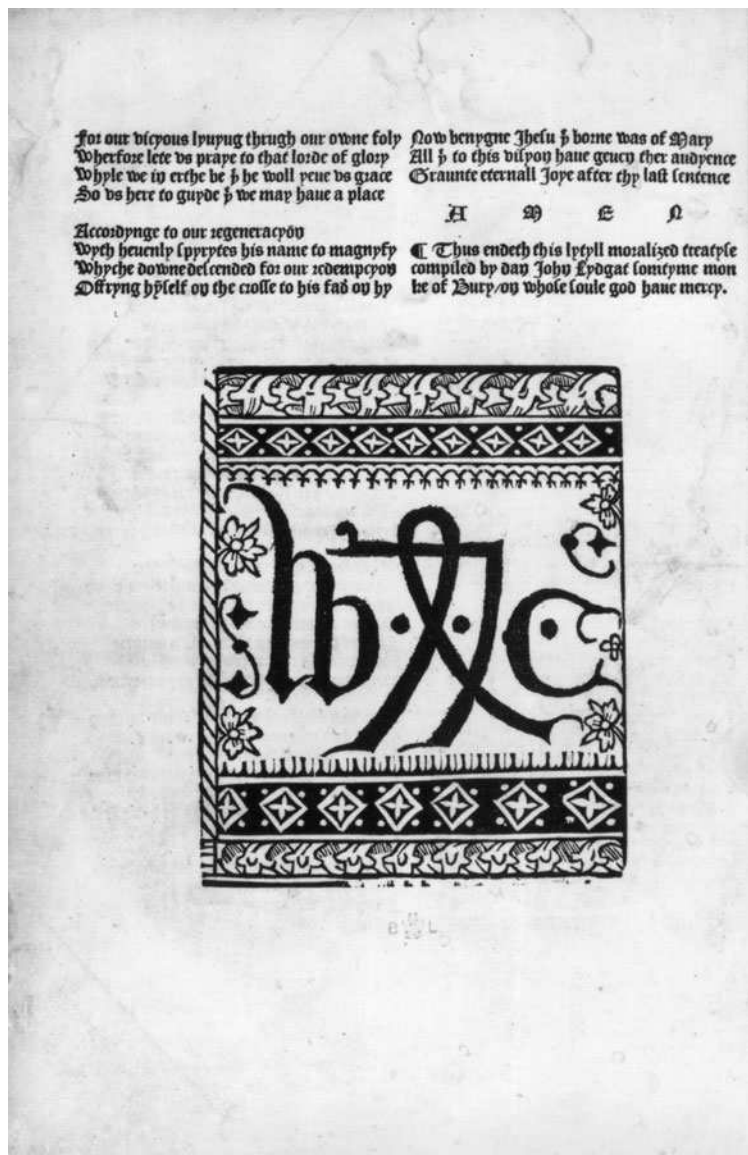


Figure 12. London, British Library, G. 11587 (2): *The Assembly of Gods* (printed by Wynkyn de Worde, 1498), STC 17005, C4v. Reproduced with the permission of the British Library.

Now pray I to them all that pe-
 ce as it rede yf there be in it any thyng
 that pleyeth therein that in all goodly
 wyse they geve thankynge to our lord
 Ihesu Crist Redemer of all crysten crea-
 tures. Of whomy procedith all wytte &
 al goodnesse. Alfo yf there be any thyng
 dyspleysaunt vnto the sayd auditors
 or reders. mekely I beseeche them at
 sette it to the defawte of myne vncun-
 nyng / and not to my wyll that wolde
 full gladly haue sayd better yf I hadde
 had cunnyng. For our boke sayth all
 that is wyrted is wyrted for our doctri-
 ne / and that is my entent. ¶ Wherfor
 mekely I beseeche you for the mercy of
 god that ye vouchesauf to pray for me
 that Crist our mercifull lord haue ppy-
 te on me: and forgyue me myn offences
 And namely of myn traslacouns & of en-
 dysynges of vanpices worldly the whiche
 I reuoke in myn retracouns. As is the
 boke of Troilus The boke also of fa-
 me The boke of the xxv. ladyes The
 boke of the Duchesse The boke of Jas-
 ynt Valentines daye. Of þe parlement
 of birdes. The tales of Caunterbury
 those whiche I wrote vnto lene. The bo-
 ke of the Lyon And many a nother bo-
 ke yf they were in my remembraunce /
 And many a songe & many a lecherous
 lay that Ihesu crist for his habundant
 grace forgyue me the trespasses. ¶ But
 of the traslacioun of Boece de consolaci-
 one & other bokes of legendes of sayn-
 tes: and Omeles & moralitee: and de
 uocouns / I thanke god our lord Ihesu
 & the quene celestiall his gloriouse mo-
 der and all the blessed company of he-
 uen. Beseechinge them that they frey-
 hereforth vnto my lyues ende lende me
 grace to bewaile myn trespasses: and to
 Andre to the saluacioun of my soule And
 graunt me grace of very penitence / con-
 fessyon & satisfaccioun to do in this pre-
 sent yfe though the benygne grace of
 hym that is kyng of kynges and preest
 ouer all preestis that bought vs with þe
 precyous blood of his hert / So that I
 maye be one of them at the moost terri-
 ble daye of Jugement that shall be sa-
 ued. A M E N

Next endith the boke of the tales of
 Caunterbury Compiled by Geoffrey
 Chaucer / of whoos soule Criste haue
 mercy. Emprynted at Westmestre by
 Wynkyn de Worde þe yere of our lord. M.
 CCCC. lxxxviii.

Figure 13. London, British Library, G. 11587 (1): Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (printed by Wynkyn de Worde, 1498), STC 5085, [...] 3v. Reproduced with the permission of the British Library.

accounts of the value of pilgrimage and of writing. He invented an explicit that names an author and adds a hopeful 'moralized' ending to the book: 'Thus endeth this lyttyl moralized treatyse compiled by dan John Lydgat somtyme monke of Bury/on whose soule god haue mercy' (C4v, Fig. 12). The ending of this text matches the ending of the text with which it is bound: 'Here endyth the boke of the tales of Caunterbury Compiled by Geffray Chaucer / of whoos soule Criste haue mercy' (....3v, Fig. 13). The medieval author buttresses the connection posited between the two works, asserts the devotional value of the single book made from them, and distinguishes it from any other copy, bought or bequeathed, of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*.

SUBTLE CRAFTS AND THE CASE FOR PRINT

My intention in this chapter has been to suggest that increasingly—or at least in new ways—the 'operation' of the English printing press was a context for the redefinition of Chaucer and Lydgate's texts. By resorting to traditional ways of valuing fictional works—as monuments to or prayers for their authors, as celebrations of a chivalric or civic culture, as versions of the manuscripts owned by gentlemen and made by noble writers and patronized artisans—printers made a case for printed texts as well as a case for fiction itself. Their reasons for doing so were, at least in part, practical: a book promoted was one moved on, quickly and profitably.

The practical concerns of printers are at the fore in records of a case between the other printer who succeeded Caxton in the 1490s, Pynson, and the executors of the estate of one 'John Rushe esquire' (his widow Dame Isabell Grey and John Wellis 'gentleman'). The case came before Chancery *c.*1510 (it is the same case as that in which Pynson describes the need to move and sell but also to give his books 'good vtterauce'). John Rushe was a gentleman of London and All Hallows', Barking, with properties in Essex and a daughter in Syon Abbey. He may have been the Rushe who served Anthony Woodville, Earl Rivers, Caxton's patron, as a Deputy of the Port of Great Yarmouth.¹⁰⁸ His former business associate, Pynson, 'of London prynter', claims that this John Rushe esquire caused your seid oratour to imprynt div[e]rs bokes ... [and] p[ro]mysed to have paide unto your seid supplyant as ofte as nede shulde have

¹⁰⁸ Plomer, 'Two Lawsuits of Richard Pynson': quotations are from this article.

required in rede money halfe of the costes and charges for the seid bokes, and in truste thereof prentyd the seid bokes ... he lost Cli and more ... to the seid John Rushe and also great som[m]es (?) of money and stuffe of howsehold furris, horse harnes, says and chamlettys lynyn cloth and other thynges. (124)

An attached schedule lists the books. They include 'vjc [600] of bocas off the falle of prynces' (126), Pynson's 1494 *editio princeps* of *The Fall of Princes*, valued at 2 shillings per copy and named after the *auctor*, 'bocas', whom Lydgate describes so often in his poem.¹⁰⁹

Pynson's copy text for the 1494 edition was an English manuscript, JRL English 2.¹¹⁰ It is a book of the mid fifteenth century copied on fine vellum with rubric linking the text to Duke Humphrey and to Lydgate. There is no knowing from whom Pynson acquired his copy text. He had been a bookseller in England for some years before 1494 and if Rushe 'caused' him to print the book as Pynson claims, and was a former servant of Rivers, he or another noble or gentle customer of the manuscript trade may have been the source. But the contemporary trade in printed books may equally have given Pynson reason to be interested in this text. There already existed several editions of Boccaccio's *De casibus* in his original Latin and in Laurent de Premierfait's translation (from which Lydgate translated the text), including one from the press of Colard Mansion. Three French texts appeared between 1470 and 1490, and in the same year that Pynson printed Lydgate's text, Anthoine Vérard, supplier of books to Henry VII, issued another French edition.¹¹¹ The blocks for the woodcuts to Pynson's 1494 *Fall* were originally used in the 1483–4 edition by Jean du Pré, one of the first illustrated printed books ever issued in Paris.¹¹² Pynson's methods may be likened to Caxton's in printing the 1478 *Boece*: among the models for this edition are the continental books arriving in England in large numbers in the 1490s, but the acquisition of an English translation undertaken for an English prince gives the book local significance.

If it was John Rushe who supplied Pynson with the copy that made this possible, then Caxton's account of a local 'gossib' who obtained

¹⁰⁹ STC 3175, IMEV 1168 and an envoy of 'Grenacres', IMEV 524. On this envoy and Lydgate's deferral to 'Bocas', see Gillespie, 'Framing Lydgate's *Fall of Princes*'.

¹¹⁰ [Doyle and Morgan], 'A Specimen of Early Printer's Copy'.

¹¹¹ See *ISTC*: the French editions are from Bruges, by Mansion, 1476; from Lyons, by Huss and Schabeler, 1483; from Paris, by Du Pré, 1483/4, and by Vérard, 1494 (on whom see Winn, *Anthoine Vérard*). A Latin edition was printed in Strasburg by Husner, 1474–5.

¹¹² See *Lydgate's Fall of Princes*, iv. 112.

a manuscript of Chaucer's work is also useful. The c.1510 Chancery case suggests that such transactions—the exchange of information and books within the communities that sustained printers' businesses—were motivated by profit. The 1494 *Fall*, in which Rushe is never mentioned, reminds us that pecuniary motives are occluded in early printed books themselves. In Pynson's suit to Chancery, the book's meaning changes. It is no longer a 'book callyd I. Bochas descriuyng the falle of Pryncys pryncessys and othir nobles translatid in to Inglisshæ bi Iohn Ludgate Monke of the Monastery of seynt Edmundes Bury atte commaundement of the worthi prynce humfrey duk of Gloucestre' (JRL English 2, fol. 1r), which is the manuscript rubric that was largely preserved by the compositor of the printed book. The book is instead a commodity, catalogued by short title for convenience, described as evidence of the loss of 'gret' sums of money, akin to 'chamlettys lynyn' and other goods.

The transformation of the meaning of the 1494 *Fall of Princes* in the Chancery case has implications for all the products of the press. According to Pynson, Rushe asked for 'other bokys of other storys' that might help him to give the new books 'good vtteraunce' as he sent 'them into the countre to sell'. Pynson supplied him with copies of 'legendys off Caxton', a lost edition of 'bevys off hampton', and two copies of *The Canterbury Tales*, presumably his own editions (126–7). What makes these or any 'vtteraunce' good, it seems, is a cultural framework that values the familiar. On some level this suggests the stakes of Pynson's case. Pynson's charge is, on the one hand, that he has lost half the expense of the production of several thousand books. On the other hand, he must argue against loss of control over his own words. Isabell Grey and John Wellis accuse him of making claims 'w[i]t[h]oute eny cause or grounde' and they suggest that he has employed 'sotelte' and 'crafty meanes' in making his case (127). In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries these terms, especially paired, evoke the idea of trickery, but they also suggest the domain of artisanship and manufacture.¹¹³ *The Fall of Princes* uses similar language to make a case for the work of vernacular authors. They are '[a]rtificeres' who

Make and vnmake in many sondry wyse,
As potteres, which to that craft entende,
Breke and renewe ther vesselis to a-mende.

(l. 12–14)

¹¹³ See *MED*, s.v. 'sotilte' and 'craft'.

In following these artisans, Lydgate hopes that he will ‘the sentence off myn auctor saue’ (l. 448). This is the hope that seems to be missing from his *Siege of Thebes* with its dismal description of dead authors. It is the hope of De Worde’s idea of the new ‘operacyon’ of the press in the *Policronicon*. The vernacular writer and the book printer will ‘a-mende’ and ‘renewe’ rather than simply ‘breke’ with tradition. In the language of Pynson’s opponents c.1510, however, the word ‘crafty’ appears to be something quite different—a mark of social distinction and a cause for conflict. The words and the actions of the merchant-class printer (unlike ‘Dame Isabell’ or her husbands, the gentlemen) are made to seem as moveable as merchandise, as subtly skilful as his new way of making books and selling them for profit.

The point of this chapter has been to extend the interests of Chapter 1 and suggest that the press, those who operated it, and its products needed a defence of some sort. There needed to be some check on the meaning and value of texts in the context of their proliferation in print—a gentleman patron, a city rebuilt, Christian meaning, or the medieval author. However, if the results of Pynson’s 1494 printing of Lydgate’s *Fall of Princes* are anything to go by, the last words on the matter may as well be utterances from Chaucer’s House of Rumour. Someone presumably told the truth in the quarrel between Pynson and the executors of Rushe’s estate. But because Pynson has, he says, ‘noe speciall wrytyng under seale’ in this case, in the absence of the more settled arrangements for publication set up at the incorporation of the Stationers’ Company, or the royal privileges applied to books from the early sixteenth century onwards, or just some stable place for a text in the world, there was no way to sort a ‘lesyng’ from a ‘sad soth sawe’. Contradictory claims merely jostle for position. The case for fictional utterances, for the value of texts, for the worth of their work and the worth of their books had, likewise, been renewed by England’s earliest printers, but it had not been resolved.

3

Assembling Chaucer's Texts in Print, 1517 to 1532

It is in *Troilus and Criseyde* that Chaucer frames a literary text most clearly as a book—one instructed to

kis the steppes where as thow seest pace
Virgile, Ovide, Omer, Lucan, and Stace.

(*Troilus*, v. 1791–2)

The author of *Troilus* locates himself at the inception of a new vernacular tradition by divorcing his practices from native traditions of 'making' or even translating, and inviting comparison with classical traditions of 'poesye' (*Troilus*, v. 1789–90). He declares himself worthy to address the authors of the classical past. His little book, in however humble a guise, traverses the distance between their 'steppes' and his own.¹ Chaucer's envoy is, in this sense, an effort to contain or control the passage of the material text and ideas about that text. In the very next stanza of *Troilus*, the author expresses intense anxiety about the bibliographical future of his poem:

So prey I God that non myswrite the,
Ne the mysmetre for defaute of tonge;
And red wherso thow be, or elles songe,
That thow be understonde, God I biseche!

(*Troilus*, v. 1795–8)

¹ Chaucer names many other Latin sources: Boethius, Dares Phrygius, Dictys of Crete, Guido de Colonne, Seneca, Alanus de Insulis, Avicenna, and Galen among them. He names Geoffrey of Monmouth in *House of Fame* (though this 'Gaufride', l. 1470, may ironically echo his own name there, 'Geffrey', l. 729). He refers to Dante in *The Legend of Good Women* and to Petrarch as a Latin source for *The Canterbury Tales*. By contrast, he never mentions two very direct sources for his vernacular 'making': Machaut or Boccaccio. For comment, see Cooper, 'Generic Variations on the Theme of Poetic and Civil Authority'.

Chaucer the author knows that publication involves the forfeiture of control over utterances, which may be mis-copied, mis-sung, misunderstood. Ralph Hanna III writes that Chaucer is ‘oppressively conscious of the way in which literature physically subsists and thereby enters culture’.² But he is not overwhelmed by the sensation: he still willingly urges his text on, gives English voice to the classical and Italian motif of the ‘little book’,³ perceives the *risk* of textual dissemination in both senses of the word—the peril, but also the potential for profit (‘God I beseche!’).

Chaucer thus anticipates, as I have argued throughout this work, both the problems and the opportunities involved in the mass production of books. The strategies he employs at the end of *Troilus* to deal with these, the ordinary conditions for textual dissemination, have a great deal to do with the author, who is both a distant source of literary authority (Virgil, Ovid), and someone close to hand, an authorial ‘I’ determined to hold his text to a subjective present. In the last chapter I suggested that traditional ideas about authorship were sometimes useful to printers. In this chapter I develop the point. In trade *Sammelbände* in the 1520s and then in William Thynne’s monumental 1532 edition of *Workes*, Chaucer’s texts and his name are presented to readers in new, more apparent, and more apparently stable ways. What Chaucer wrote, declares the title-page to Thynne’s *Workes*, ‘in the table more playnly dothe appere’.⁴ But Chaucer’s sense of the possibility, indeed the probability, of textual infidelity in the transmission of his *Troilus* supplies an overlapping framework for discussion of early sixteenth-century editions of his writing. Several early editions of Chaucer’s poems promote a more permissive attitude to literary authority and the work of the writer; they demand that we reconsider the nature of the monument made of Chaucer’s books in the period. In this chapter I will argue more fully something occasionally observed above: the author is, or can at least always be read *as*, a way to say something playful as well as something ‘playn’ about the medieval text and the books made from it.

² Hanna, *Pursuing History*, 175.

³ See Schoek, “‘Go Little Book’”, and Tatlock, ‘The Epilog of Chaucer’s *Troilus*’. Boccaccio is the direct source for Chaucer, though the tradition can be traced to Ovid and Martial and was adapted in the work of Dante, Petrarch, and Provençal poets in the later Middle Ages.

⁴ STC 5080, A1r, described in detail below.

‘THISE BOKES WOL ME SHENDE’: *TROILUS* IN 1517

The consummate Chaucerian image for the generation and the reception of texts is Criseyde, she who anticipates the commitment of her life-narrative to posterity in acutely bookish terms:

‘Allas, of me, unto the worldes ende,
Shal neyther ben ywriten nor ysonge
No good word, for thise bokes wol me shende.’

(*Troilus*, v. 1058–60)

As Chaucer anticipates reproduction of authorial identity in books, so does Criseyde imagine the books in which she will be reproduced, and the words of authors who will layer anti-feminist ideas from the tip of their pens and tongues onto her story. However, Chaucer, as narrator, famously refuses to condemn Criseyde. He addresses his female readers with the disclaimer:

al be that Criseyde was untrewē,
That for that gilt ... be nat wroth with me.
Ye may hire gilt in other bokes se.

(*Troilus*, v. 1774–6)⁵

He gives no details of the outcome of her actions, or even

how longe it was bytwene
That she forsok [Troilus] for this Diomedē,

because ‘[t]her is non auctour telleth it’ (*Troilus*, v. 1086–8). Not even Lollius, the *auctor* Chaucer has invented as a source for this poem, can be held responsible for readers’ condemnation of Criseyde.⁶ The very idea of the author, and the risk of wrath ventured by the act of authorship, is abandoned in favour of an idea of the unstable text. Chaucer cannot control his sliding creation. He does not wish to. He wishes to ‘synke’, like a vision of Troilus glimpsed through a window, into his lady/book’s ‘softe’ (rather than wrathful, resistant) form.⁷ The

⁵ See Cook, ‘The Character of Criseyde’, and Martin, *Chaucer’s Women*, 156–88, for an early and a more recent critical approach to Criseyde’s guilt (respectively).

⁶ On Lollius, whose existence is probably the result of a medieval misreading of some lines from Horace, see Kittredge, ‘Chaucer’s Lollius’, and Millett, ‘Chaucer, Lollius, and the Medieval Theory of Authorship’.

⁷ This is the impression that Troilus makes on Criseyde in *Troilus*, II. 650.

woman becomes an eroticized trope for a text within which the writer knows that his authority will disappear.⁸

Criseyde recognizes the duplicity in this approach to women and to texts. A writer who refuses to judge is still a creator of 'bokes', one who explicitly anticipates the vagaries of interpretation that Criseyde fears will bring an end to all her good intentions. As Chaucer makes Criseyde into an analogy for those books and their slippery meanings, he transforms her into that which defiles her. The 'other bokes' to which he refers gesture to the authorities for his text in an imagined literary past, but also (we may observe in hindsight) to new authors, who will, following the logic of his envoy, continue his narrative. Lydgate had something to say on the matter, leaving a 'recorde of Cryseyde' in *The Troy Book* (iv. 2164). Once she finally has 'oven al hir herte | To Diomedes' (iv. 2165–6), the author exclaims:

Loo! what pite is in wommanhede,
What mercy eke & benygne routhe—
þat newly can al her olde trouthe,
Of nature, late slyppe a-syde.

(iv. 2148–51)

Much of this is familiar: the ironically laudatory verses upon the fallen woman include a Chaucerian coupling of 'routhe' and 'trouthe' in rhyme; the account of 'pite' equates it with the unstable nature of women.⁹ It is the same pity that 'renneth soone in gentil herte' in May in *The Merchant's Tale* (*The Canterbury Tales*, iv. 1986), and the pity felt by the woman who will willingly favour anyone, knight, cleric, yeoman, groom, in the English poem *Ragman Roll*.¹⁰ Lydgate writes of her changefulness. It

is nat so redy for to make
In Lombard Strete of crowne nor docket—
Al paie is good, be so þe prente be set:
Her lettre of change doth no man abide!

(*The Troy Book*, iv. 2154–7)

⁸ See Benson, 'The Opaque Text of Chaucer's Criseyde', and Dinshaw, *Chaucer's Sexual Poetics*, ch. 1.

⁹ See Pearsall, 'Chaucer and Lydgate', 48–9; Torti, 'From "History" to Tragedy"', 178–9; Watson, 'Outdoing Chaucer', 96–8.

¹⁰ See the edition in Wright (ed.), *Anecdota Literaria*, 83–8.

In London's banks in Lombard Street, as in the mercantile economies of *The Merchant's Tale*, the value of everything resides in worldly 'paie':¹¹ Criseyde's letter to Troilus, her action in forsaking him—her words and the words said about her—are all reduced by analogy to 'newly' printed coins and bills of exchange. The fate of Criseyde's story is indeed 'set'. At the climax of Henryson's *Testament of Crisseid*, Troilus will pass her a purse, an act of pity in which judgement is passed. Criseyde is so changeful that Troilus, who is true, cannot even see how she has changed.¹² She will be 'chaunged' for royal favour and gold in Wyatt's third satire.¹³ She will be aligned with a gold piece by the fool in *Twelfth Night* as he pimps Olivia to Viola/Caesarion and the duke like a latter-day Pandarus.¹⁴ And as her meaning slips and slides further—as far and further, even, than her own 'trouthe'—she will become a metaphor for the paradox of 'prente' itself. In Lydgate's *Troy Book*, the dual meaning of 'prente'—to fix in the mind, to impress value upon a coin—is one basis for the poet's denunciation of pliable feminine nature.¹⁵ The impression of Troilus does not 'abide' in Criseyde. But 'prente' does not hold to its 'olde trouthe' either. The word meant something quite different within a few decades of Lydgate's death and Criseyde was made to accommodate this change as well. Sexualized representations of the print trade—books construed as the bastard children of ladies well 'pressed'—were common in the early modern period.¹⁶ John Taylor's 1630 poem, a *Comparison betwixt a Whore and a Booke*, makes the point explicitly:

And as a new *whore* is belov'd and sought,
So is a new *Booke* in request and bought.

.
As *whores* haue Panders to emblaze their worth,
So these have Stationers to set them forth.¹⁷

¹¹ In 1318, Langbourn Street changed its name to Lombard Street after Lombard merchants settled there; from the early years of the reign of Edward I, Lombards served as bankers to the English crown. In 1376, the mayor, aldermen, and commons of London petitioned the king to forbid Lombards to live in the city or act as brokers in retail sales: Lydgate seems, here, to invoke an old anxiety about new dealers and dealings in money. On this, Chaucerian ideas about currency, and Criseyde as a coin, see Shoaf, *Dante, Chaucer, and the Currency of the Word*, ch. 6.

¹² See Riddy, "Abject Odious".

¹³ *Collected Poems of Sir Thomas Wyatt*, cvii. 68–71, 82 (discussed further in the next chapter).

¹⁴ See Shakespeare, *The Complete Works, Twelfth Night*, iii. 1.

¹⁵ See my discussion of the etymology of the word in Ch. 1.

¹⁶ See Wall, *The Imprint of Gender*, 202–11.

Criseyde is unnamed but not forgotten here. Her uncle evokes her reputation even as the concerns about scribal transmission that she represents in Chaucer's poem are displaced by the new technologies of the press.

In 1517, the printer Wynkyn de Worde added his own opinion on the matter of Criseyde's guilt to his edition of *Troilus*.¹⁸ The book closes upon a verse epilogue in which Criseyde is at once Troilus's deceiver, the personification of cruel *fortuna*, and the representative of all womankind:

And here an ende / of Troylus heuynesse
 As touchynge Cresyde / to hym ryght unkynde
 Falsly forswornn / deflouryng his worthynes
 For his treue loue / she hath hym made blynde
 Of feminine gendre / y^e woman most unkynde
 Dyomedes on her whele / she hath set on hye
 The faythe of a woman / by her now maye you se
 Was not Arystotle / for all his clergie
 Uyrghyll the cunnyng / deceyued also
 By women inestymable / for to here or se

In this book, as she feared, Criseyde will 'be understonde' as famous, exemplary, guilty. And Chaucer will bear responsibility for his exemplary text:

Thus endeth the treatyse / of Troylus the heuy
 By Geffraye Chaucer / compyled and done
 He prayenge the reders / this mater not deny.

(Z7v)

The verses allude to the beginning of Chaucer's poem, where the narrator instructs happy lovers to remember 'passed hevynesse' as they read or listen to him (*Troilus*, I. 24). They then shift the attention of a reader or listener to Chaucer's prayers for his poem and its 'mater'. As De Worde turns the poem into a book he recalls, as Chaucer does, the place of the author in textual history. The stanzas on Z7v are entitled 'The auctour': this is, by implication, an authoritative ending, perhaps the ending Chaucer always intended for 'the noble and amorous auncyent

¹⁷ Norbrook and Woudhuysen (eds.), *The Penguin Book of Renaissance Verse*, no. 364, ll. 1–4.

¹⁸ STC 5095, IMEV 3327. Paratext is reproduced in full in Trigg, *Congenial Souls*, 119–20.

hystory of Troilus and Cresyde / in the tyme of the syege of Troye. Compyled by Geffraye Chaucer' (A1r, see Fig. 14).

Critics have described De Worde's verses as a deliberate Renaissance forgery, and the counterfeit Chaucerian text has been deemed valuable only for what it might say about near-contemporary reception of the work. C. David Benson and David Rollman argue that the epilogue verses are evidence that early audiences presumed Criseyde's guilt, and that twentieth-century critics should proceed on the basis that this was also Chaucer's presumption.¹⁹ Stephanie Trigg argues that with the additional verses De Worde 'imposes his own emphatic ideological closure on the poem' and in doing so places it in a 'homosocial' Tudor interpretive community.²⁰ Only Julia Boffey has considered what relationship they might have to the status of this little book *as* a book, printed by De Worde, available to customers and other retailers along with other little books from his press, a great many of them, like this one, anti-feminist in concern.²¹

The history of the only surviving, British Library, copy of De Worde's edition suggests the link between this book and a broader range of products from his and contemporary presses. It is a slim volume, washed, trimmed, and bound in morocco. It is remembered by the bibliographer Thomas Frognall Dibdin in his 1812 *Bibliographical Decameron*, where it is the basis for an anecdote (a footnote to a footnote) upon the sale the duke of Roxburghe's Library in 1812, '[a] day of unexampled courage, slaughter, devastation, and phrensy ... Some of the very scarcest and most beautifully-conditioned copies of old poetry, sold on this day were the following' (I have updated his list using *STC*; the printer is De Worde unless otherwise stated; items by Chaucer and Lydgate are listed in the *STC* index in this book):

Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde*, 1517

Lydgate, *The Temple of Glas*, 1506?

William Nevill, *Castell of pleasure*, 1530? (*STC* 18475)

Conusance damours, printed by Pynson, 1528? (*STC* 5631)

William Walter, *Spectacle of louers*, 1533? (*STC* 25008)

Walter, *Tytus & Gesyppus*, c.1525 (*STC* 3184.5)

¹⁹ Benson and Rollman, 'Wynkyn De Worde and the Ending of Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*'.

²⁰ Trigg, *Congenial Souls*, 119–22 (119).

²¹ Boffey, 'Wynkyn de Worde and Misogyny in Print'.

The noble and amorous auncient hysto-
ry of Troilus and Cresseide / in the tyme of
the syege of Troie. Cōpyled by Geffraye
Chaucer.



Figure 14. San Marino, Calif., Huntington Library, 98523: Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* (printed by Wynkyn de Worde, 1517), *STC* 5095, A1r. Reproduced by permission of The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

Chaucer, *The Complaint of Mars* and *The Complaint of Venus*, printed by Notary, 1500?

Walter, *Guystarde and Sygsmonde*, 1532 (STC 3183.5)

Dysputacyon ... of the herte, 1516? (STC 6915)

Lydgate, *The Complaint of the Black Knight*, 1531?

Beaulte of women, printed by Robert Wyer, c.1540 (STC 1697)

Thomas Feylde, *Contrauerse bytwene a louer and a jaye*, 1527? (STC 10838.7).²²

Dibden goes on: 'Know, therefore, and believe, that *these very articles* were formerly bound IN ONE VOLUME, in the collection of Dr Farmer (see *Bibl. Farm.* no. 6451) which "one volume" was sold for *Twenty Five Guineas* ONLY at the sale of the library. The volume was indeed "without propriety deemed to be matchless".'²³

In fact, a kind of match may be found for the book that so excites Dibdin. This single-volume quarto assembly of lyric verse, dream visions, courtly love poems, and misogynist tracts resembles in content and format the 'Oxford' Chaucer manuscripts described in Chapter 1. As evidence of the collection of printed pamphlets in *Sammelbände* it may be added to my earlier arguments about the interpenetration of scribal and printed traditions. In method of composition, for instance, this *Sammelband* most closely resembles such booklet-based manuscripts as Bodl. Fairfax 16 and Camb. Trinity R. 3. 21. One of its component pamphlets, *The Complaint of the Black Knight*, was in fact set up in De Worde's shop from the Oxford Chaucer manuscript Bodl. Bodley 638.²⁴ However, here I would also make another point. Eleanor Prescott Hammond first described the 'Oxford Group' of Chaucer manuscripts, and so bequeathed a useful shorthand for future scholars. Some Bodleian books are identified; a number of similar volumes containing items now ascribed to Chaucer may be arranged around these.²⁵ The author, Chaucer, becomes a 'principle of thrift', enabling discussion of a group

²² Details on the Chaucer and Lydgate quartos are given above. Items 1–2, 4–6, 7–8, 10, 12 are BL C. 132. i. 38–45; item 11 is in the Library of Congress, Washington DC; items 3, 7, 9 are Huntington 49038; 31324; 63543. See Allison, 'Chatsworth Books in the British Library', 52, for provenance. I must thank A. S. G. Edwards for drawing my attention to this note. The volume once contained a prose tract, now lost.

²³ Dibdin, *The Bibliographical Decameron*, iii. 59–60.

²⁴ First noticed in Erler, 'Printers' Copy'.

²⁵ See Hammond, *Chaucer*, 338–9. For a recent discussion, see Costomiris, 'Bodleian MS Tanner 346 and William Thynne's Edition of Clanvowe's "Cuckoo and the Nightingale"'.

of late fifteenth-century collections of verse, to which we could add the *Sammelband* from Dr Farmer's library. However, the authorial principle here does not wholly close down as well as disclose meaning. There are other ways of thinking about these books. They are exactly the sort of volumes within which an author and his authoritative meaning for a text might vanish, and in doing so provide the basis for a new reading of Chaucer's minor poems and imitations of them, and a new model for the bibliographical cultures of early sixteenth-century England.

This reading begins at the beginning of the Farmer *Sammelband* with the verse epilogue to De Worde's edition of *Troilus*. The reader is invited to consider *Troilus* in relation to Virgil and Aristotle, intellectual heavyweights, *auctores* who were also dupes of women 'for to here or se'. In the context of the Farmer *Sammelband*, the pair appear in William Walter's *Spectacle of flouers*, a catalogue, to quote the title page, of 'many goodly argumentes of good women and bad' including the observation that

Uyrgyll by a woman / in a basket was hanged
A woman rode on aristotell / with shame and vyolence.²⁶

The story of Aristotle and his violent mistress Phyllis was well known in the Middle Ages and Renaissance; Virgil appears in a basket in dozens of continental vernacular *fabliaux* up to and after 1517.²⁷ Both are mentioned in the parade of unfortunate lovers in Book VIII of Gower's *Confessio Amantis*.²⁸ But when Walter took up his pen, the tale of Virgil in his basket had been told in just one English text, Stephen Hawes's *Pastime of Pleasure*, written 1503/4 and printed 1509 by De Worde.²⁹ In Hawes's version, the story is not so much exemplary as scatological. Virgil's basket, and he in it, are suspended from the window of his paramour, the emperor's daughter, for the amusement of all of Rome. He takes his revenge by putting out all of the fires in the city, and persuading the emperor to have his daughter tied up naked in the square, with a hot coal in her 'praty preuyte' (l. 3725), so that people might light their fires by her farts. In the *Pastime*, as in Walter's *Spectacle*, the story immediately follows that of Aristotle. And directly

²⁶ Cited from *STC* 25008, ll. 451–2.

²⁷ See Spargo, *Virgil the Necromancer*.

²⁸ *Confessio Amantis*, VIII. 2705, 2714.

²⁹ *STC* 12948 (quotations from the edition cited in the bibliography, long s silently amended).

before both is the 'Recorde of Creseyd and of Troylus the doloure' (l. 3567). The Chaucerian allusion picks up on the wording of Lydgate's version of events in the 'tyme of the syege of Troye', and is taken up by another contemporary writer whose poem was once a part of the Farmer *Sammelband*, Thomas Feylde. His 1527? *Contrauersye between a loue and a iaye* has a prologue that praises Chaucer and 'yonge Steuen Hawse' and it too presents the case for and against women and love, and cites sources, including

Recorde of Cresyde
Whome Troylus loued
And was sore payned
Causer doth tell.³⁰

Within the codicological framework supplied by the Farmer *Sammelband*, the Virgil-Aristotle-Troilus topos functions as a bawdy, anti-feminist, inter-textual connection between some medieval and some Tudor poems.

The implications of this are commercial as well as literary. Indeed, literary meaning seems to emerge, in part, from a commercial traffic in such books. The 1517 *Troilus* is a text whose ending has been changed. It is a book that 'newly can al [its] olde trouthe | ... late slyppe aside' in favour of an elaborate misogynist and 'amerous' textual game. Like Criseyde, it can be remembered as an object for *exchange*. It was available for cash (or some equivalent 'lettre of change') at De Worde's premises in Fleet Street, or at any other bustling shop or fair where his printed wares were retailed. Living authors might be involved in these transactions, and so might the authors of the literary past. De Worde, as A. S. G. Edwards first observed, had an apparently exclusive arrangement to print Hawes's works in the early sixteenth century.³¹ Hawes, Feylde, Walter, and Robert Copland (who was De Worde's apprentice; who added paratextual verses to three items from the Farmer *Sammelband*—the *Spectacle*, *Guystarde*, and the *Castell of Pleasure*; and who is a likely author of the verses added to *Troilus*) seem to have worked as part of a loose, literary community centred on De Worde's print-publishing operations. De Worde alone printed their texts; their texts are, as I have suggested, replete with references to other

³⁰ Cited from STC 10838.7, A1v, C2r.

³¹ Edwards, 'Poet and Printer in Sixteenth Century England'. For an account of a similar arrangement, see Carlson, 'Alexander Barclay and Richard Pynson'.

books printed in his shop. These allusions very often depend upon ideas about the authors of English literary tradition. Hawes, for instance, lists a selection of works by Lydgate in his *Pastime*, among them ‘Saynt Edmundes lyfe’, ‘the fall of prynces’,

And of the chorle / he made the fable

He fayned also / the court of sapyence

And translated / with all his dylygence

The grete boke / of the last destruccyon

Of the cyte of Troye

And bytwene vertue / and the lyfe vycyous

Of goddes and goddes / a boke solacious

He dyde compyle / and the tyme to passe

Of loue he made / the bryght temple of glasse.

(*Pastime of Pleasure*, 1344–65)

The list of an old writer's books serves to authorize the present writer's literary efforts, but the conventional use of such a list (Lydgate lists Chaucer's works in his *Fall*, for instance) has shifted: it now advertises the printer's as well as the writer's wares, and promotes the best habits of the consumer, who might be encouraged to buy all of the texts printed by De Worde. Each of the shorter of these works—‘pamflete[s]’, as they are described by Hawes (*Pastime of Pleasure*, 1356)—were issued by De Worde by about 1509 in quarto editions, in which form they could routinely be arranged into ‘grete boke[s]’, *Sammelbände* containing selections of Lydgate's works.

As I have argued elsewhere at length, De Worde and the retailers who handled his products may have made up such volumes in-house, but they might equally have sold pamphlets to consumers separately. The Farmer *Sammelband*, which has only one, inscrutable early inscription, may represent the work of a much later collector, anxious to protect some old verse pamphlets in his or her library by binding them.³² The point I would make here is one that I made in relation to manuscript booklets in Chapter 1 and Caxton's Chaucer folios and De Worde's Lydgate quartos in Chapter 2. It was in the interests of print-producers

³² See Gillespie, ‘Poets, Printers, and Early English *Sammelbände*’. The name ‘george Burgogyne’ appears on A1r of the copy of *Troilus* in a secretary hand, but in no other item. He was perhaps related to the London family of that name (see PCC, Prob. 11/28 for the will of ‘J Borgoyne gentleman’, proved 1540).

to predict but not to limit open-ended, consumer-driven codicizing activities. It was in De Worde's interest to invite the book buyer to think productively and creatively about texts and the medieval 'auctour' rather than to prescribe meaning. What seems to be monologic meaning in the 1517 *Troilus*—what Trigg describes as the 'emphatic' reading of Criseyde's guilt there—is, in my view, subject to the imposition of a dialogic structure. The allusions to *auctores*, Chaucer among them, in De Worde's verse epilogue to the 1517 *Troilus* invite the reader to situate (and buy and bind) the poem along with the sorts of texts in the Farmer *Sammelband* where they instantiate a debate—between those who would love and those who would avoid love's vicissitudes, between the complaints of Mars and those of Venus, between Walter's Counsel and Love in *The Spectacle*, between the lover and the sceptical jay, Nevill's Pity and Disdain, false Criseyde and faithful Troilus.

This debate leads us to some conclusions about the way that De Worde and his contemporaries handled not only medieval texts but also printed books themselves and their manuscript analogues. Bodl. Bodley 638 served as copy text for other De Worde editions: his edition of *The Parliament of Fowls* of 1530;³³ and lost editions of *The Chance of Dice* and *Ragman Roll* which have also been marked up for print in this manuscript.³⁴ In the mid nineteenth century, William Carew Hazlitt saw a copy of a since lost, printed edition of *Ragman Roll* and recorded part of 'L'envoy of the printer':

Go lytyl rolle where thou arte bought or solde
Amonge fayre women behaue the manerly:
Without rewarde of any fee or golde,
Saye as it is touchynge trouthe hardely: & c.

[E]nprynted at London in the Fletestrete at the [Sygn]e of the Sonne by Wynkyn de Worde.³⁵

French analogues for the poem that De Worde printed, *Ragman Roll*, were games for both sexes. The English text, as the poet explains in the prologue, is for 'my ladyes', gentlewomen, 'maistresses', who must choose a string from a roll held by 'Kynge Ragman' and so the stanza to which that string is attached. It will 'streight yow leyde / Unto the verry path of your governance'. Each stanza describes a

³³ STC 5092, IMEV 3412. See my discussion of the text with respect to Pynson's edition below.

³⁴ Erler, 'Printers' Copy'.

³⁵ Hazlitt, *Collections and Notes* 1867–76, 495.

woman of certain 'kynde': she who '[w]ith every jantylman' speaks and deals '[i]n honesté' or she who, like Lydgate's Criseyde, would 'cowneterfete' the bright coin of her love by pitying even 'yomen and grome'.³⁶ The structures of the poem are binary—some women are good, others not. The result is anything but: the text is, to use the word as it has passed to modern parlance, a late medieval and early Tudor 'rigmarole'³⁷—another addition to an interminable and broadly misogynist debate about the meaning of love and female virtue. The envoy, meanwhile, may be added to the collection of paratextual and (self-consciously, ironically) self-promoting poems found in De Worde's verse pamphlets. It conflates the object of the game with a commerce in books. The mannered behaviour and sexual propriety of the virtuous are linked to the printer's efforts to distance his transactions from monetary 'rewarde'. That which is 'bought or sold' should nevertheless seek no 'fee or golde'. The book must hold firm to a higher ideal, as Troilus does in Chaucer's poem. But the printer's envoy is also a joke. It touches 'trouthe hardely', where 'hardely' means barely *and* certainly.³⁸ It is certainly true that an early Tudor printed pamphlet like *Ragman Roll* would not fetch any gold or a feudal 'fee'. But it is hardly the case that it would be handed over without exchange of the requisite 'rewarde'—the 'peny' that Copland (a possible author of this envoy) complains elsewhere is all that tight-fisted buyers will relinquish for the 'toyes' they like to read.³⁹ *Ragman Roll*, I would argue, is just such toy, and, like the 1517 *Troilus*, it is wittily promoted in these terms.

TWO EDITIONS OF *THE PARLIAMENT OF FOWLS*

The 1517 *Troilus* links Chaucer's works to other texts, old and new, and suggests that the medieval author was engaged in the production of unstable and playful responses to those texts. It also reminds us that such literary and bibliographical traditions were long-standing. Fifteenth-century scribes adapted Chaucer's texts for consumer- and perhaps producer-initiated manuscript collections rather like the Farmer

³⁶ Wright (ed.), *Anecdota Literaria*, *Ragman Roll*, ll. 83–8. See *Confessio Amantis*, ii. 545 for Gower's allusion to and account of the game. The poem is also found in Bodl. Fairfax 16.

³⁷ See *OED*, s.v. 'rigmarole'.

³⁸ See *MED*, s.v. 'hardelie'.

³⁹ See Robert Copland: *Poems*, *The Seuen Sorowes*, Prologue, 35.

Sammelband, and earlier poets, Chaucer among them, show an interest in the way a traffic in texts might prove relentlessly unsettling.

The medieval culture to which Chaucerian writing belongs, in my account, tends to defer the impulse for resolution or stability. It sets all the possibilities created by fiction in a dazzling, enchanting light, the light that shines on a portrait of the poet on the first folio of the Takamiya copy of *The Canterbury Tales* where, like rain, it 'hathe perced to the roote' and engendered all the disparate energies of the text.⁴⁰ It is the light that

ouer eche syde dyd shyne
Wherof the coulour made my herte ryght fayne
(ll.48–9)

in Nevill's *Castell of pleasure*. It illuminates but does not resolve the scene for the dreamer-reader. Images of literary light were recast in the sixteenth century. They were appropriated for a periodic scheme created by English writers and reformers—some of them printers—who sought to strip back cumulative layers of history, like so many shining ornaments on an idolatrous shrine, in order to annihilate all but the most stable, centralised, humanist (and ultimately, as I will argue in Chapter 5, protestant) meanings for language, literature, and books. The time had come, as the reformist antiquary John Bale put it, to rescue whatever scraps might be worth the effort from a 'palpable kynde of darkenesse', an unenlightened Middle Age. This could be done 'by the art of pryntyng', but given that the darkness was 'palpable', so thick with texts, those worth retrieving would have to be clearly distinguished.⁴¹ They could be when identified with a named writer—Bede, Monmouth, Wyclif, Chaucer.

Bale, following the unpublished manuscripts of his predecessor Leland, was the first to publish a list of texts arranged under the names of English authors.⁴² He was not the first to describe this process by way of images of light and dark, however. The imagery was traditional and it will be important to my discussion of another early Tudor Chaucer edition. In 1525?, John Rastell printed a new edition

⁴⁰ *Canterbury Tales*, I, 2; Tokyo, Takamiya 24; see Hardman, 'Presenting the Text' (plate p. 5).

⁴¹ See his edition of the *Laboryouse iourney & serche of Iohan Leylande*, 1549 (STC 15445), A5r, B2r; see King, "'The Light of Printing'".

⁴² Bale's *Summarium* and *Catalogus* of English writers and their works were published in 1548–9 (STC 1295–6) and in Basle, 1557–9; see Hudson, 'Visio Baleii', and Simpson, *Reform and Cultural Revolution*, ch. 1.

of Chaucer's *Parliament of Fowls*.⁴³ Rastell was on the periphery of humanist circles (themselves shifting and at times rather peripheral) in early Tudor London.⁴⁴ He was a stationer and law printer, but is most often remembered as a pamphleteer and playwright.⁴⁵ A 1538 posthumous inventory of his shop gives a sense of the range of the material he owned, printed, and retailed: editions of statutes, manuals of law, chronicles, part of a copy of Chaucer's *Workes*, his own plays, and poems by John Skelton. Rastell was also brother-in-law and sometime printer to (though sometimes estranged from) Sir Thomas More. The books in his shop included some in line with England's new culture of humanist learning: the works of Erasmus; Hebrew and Greek as well as Latin grammars; classical texts printed in Basle and Louvain.⁴⁶ Rastell is quite capable of speaking the fashionable languages of the early Renaissance in the paratext to the 1525? *Parliament of Fowls*:

Here begynneth the parlyament of fowles compyled
by the noble rethorycyen Geffray Chaucer.
Johannes Rastell in laudem magistri galfridi chaucer.

For as aurora departith the darkenes
Toward the risynge of firy phebus bryght
And the shadowes of the blake cloudy skyes
Are with drawyn through lucyfers lyght
So in englyssh the warkes who redyth a ryght
Of this noble man all other doth excell
In great wysdom & vnderstandyng supptell

And by cause I am assuryd of this thyng
That this lytyl treatese whiche is callyd
The parlyament of fowles was of his doying
with oft inquisicyon I haue hyt achuyd
And hyt publisshide & made to be prentyd
which wark not only but all other that he made
For nobyl quik sentence ben worthy to be radde.

(A1r–v)

⁴³ STC 5091.5, IMEV 3412 (only a single fragmentary copy survives).

⁴⁴ On Tudor humanism, see Fox and Guy, *Reassessing the Henrician Age*, 1–33.

⁴⁵ See Geritz and Laine, *John Rastell*; Devereux, 'John Rastell's Press in the English reformation'; Graham, 'The Rastells and the Printed English Law Book of the Renaissance'.

⁴⁶ Roberts, 'John Rastell's Inventory of 1538'.

The 'thyng' sought in Rastell's prefatory verse is remarkably easy to discover within impenetrable 'blake cloudy skyes', for it is something more than just a 'lytyl treatese', among ephemeral, penny-worth poems. Rastell has turned it into a 'wark'. He has done so by assigning a thing whose canonical status was previously uncertain an author, one who is also a 'magister', a master of his craft, a refiner or teacher of the language.⁴⁷ Those sufficiently skilled or educated to erudition, Rastell implies, might improve the English language, as humanists of his day improved the languages of classical and biblical texts.⁴⁸ Rastell's praise extends, implicitly, to his own diligent inquisition and labour. He modernized and amended *The Parliament*, apparently using a manuscript rather than Caxton's anonymous fifteenth-century edition as his copy text. However, he did not, by modern editorial standards, so much improve the text as strangely alter and sometimes bowdlerize it.⁴⁹ He gives 'Beaute' clothes where Chaucer would rather not. 'Than sawe I' says Rastell's Chaucerian narrator, 'beaute with a nyce atyre'.⁵⁰ Rastell's text turns Priapus into a more chaste Priamus and puts Venus 'in her aray full ryght' (rather than at play with 'hire porter Richesse', *Parliament*, l. 261) at precisely the point in the poem that the printer recalls by way of his own prefatorial imagery of light and dark:

yet darke was the place and after wey light
 Than saw I a lytill lyght les vnneth it be might.
 And in a bed of gold she lay to rest
 Tyll that the hote son gan to goo to west
 Her gilt here was as golde threde
 Unboundyn ware her tresshis as she lay
 And nakyd from the brest vnto the hed
 That men myght her see all soth to say
 The remenaunt couerd all well to my pay

⁴⁷ The term 'magister' in Latin and English in the period was commonly applied to those who had reached the academic rank of 'Master', including grammar school teachers (*OED*, s.v. 'magister'); Jean de Meun was assigned the title by his admirers in the fourteenth century (Minnis, *Magister Amoris*, 1–2).

⁴⁸ On the 'improvement' of the English language in the sixteenth century see Jones, *The Triumph of the English Language*; on Chaucer's posthumous involvement, Cannon, *The Making of Chaucer's English*, 181–220; on its impact on the printing of Chaucer, Horobin, *The Language of the Chaucer Tradition*, ch. 5.

⁴⁹ Devereux, 'John Rastell's Text of *The Parliament of Fowls*', and Erler, 'Printer's Copy'.

⁵⁰ Compare the *Riverside* reading, *Parliament of Fowls*, l. 225: 'I saw Beute withouten any atyre'.

Right with a kerchef all of valaunce
 For ther was no stronge cloth of defence.

(A6v)

Rastell's text seems prudish, but if passages such as this are read more closely, his emendations may also unbind and cast a 'lytill lyght' on aspects of Chaucer's own, densely allusive poem. In Rastell's *Parliament*, as in Chaucer's, but given his changes to the text even more emphatically, 'cloth' is subject to the enthralled and eroticized gaze of a male narrator and all 'men' who wonder what they 'myght ... see'. The same cloth is a connection to Dame Nature, soon to appear in the poem in the guise given to her by 'Aleyne' in the 'Pleynt of Kynde' (*Parliament of Fowls*, l. 316), Alanus de Insulis's *De planctu naturae*, where Nature's robes are rent by the hands of desiring, sinful men, and where cloth is also a figure for the process of literary creation. Having presented her Platonic concerns about poets and the 'elegant overlay' they give to falsehood, their images of 'gods ... in the playground of Venus' (images that nevertheless allow for some 'sweet kernel of truth')—and as she accounts for the tears and gaps in the fabric that properly covers her—Nature says of her narrative that she will 'gild things immodest with the golden trappings of modest words and ... clothe them with the varied colours of graceful diction'.⁵¹ Here and elsewhere *De planctu naturae* advances and complicates those medieval theories of allegory in which imaginative, fictional texts are said to 'veil' Christian truth. Stripped of the same rhetorical ornament upon which even Nature depends, the unclothed form of a text, like the naked image of the pagan Venus, may remain corrupt and corrupting.⁵² *The Parliament of Fowls* draws on *De planctu* in part to hint at a conventional 'defence' of amorous fiction. If we read allegorically—see Christ as that light in the garden that will never sink to dark, for instance, or if we perceive in Venus's nakedness sin as well as 'pay'—we perhaps read 'a ryght', as Rastell puts it. But Rastell's editorial changes ultimately concentrate attention not on right reading but on Chaucer's narrator's attraction to the 'remenaunt couerd', his thoughts of 'thikker cloth', his fascination with glittering surfaces and intensified desire for the shamefully worthless things beneath them. Likewise, Rastell's images of light and dark do

⁵¹ *Alan of Lille: Plaint of Nature*, 140–3.

⁵² See Wetherbee, 'The Function of Poetry in the 'De Planctu Naturae' of Alain de Lille', esp. 101–5 on deliberate ambiguity in the links in the text between literary and sexual corruption.

not simply recuperate this text for humanist or even straightforwardly Christian schemes. They also engage in an allusive, Chaucerian play of meaning. The light cast by the poem, Rastell writes, is that of the morning star, Lucifer of Isaiah 14: 12. It is also specifically the light from the other 'warkes' that Chaucer made. In *Boece* human suffering sweetens heavenly reward, as if 'Lucifer, the day-sterre, hathe chased away the dirke nyght' (III, met. 9–10). But in *Troilus*, the Boethian scheme is reversed by those who fail to recognize the yoke of earthly things: 'Lucyfer' awakes the lovers from their idealized 'hevene' to 'foule daunger and ... feere' (III. 1417, 1321–2), to forced recognition of the consequences of actions that they and the narrator, like the narrator of *The Parliament*, have clothed in the elegant but ultimately empty diction of courtly love. Chaucer's *Parliament of Fowls* is 'worthy to be radde' because like 'all other that he made' its wisdom is 'suptell', veiled, and problematic. As he 'publishes' it, Rastell adds to, rather than prudishly narrows, its capacity for allusion and evasion.

Above, I described another edition of *The Parliament of Fowls* that De Worde printed in 1530 and noticed Bodl. Bodley 638 as the copy-text for this (or for an earlier edition that lies directly behind it).⁵³ De Worde's former apprentice, the stationer and printer Robert Copland, supplied some promotional verses as packaging for the book. According to the paratextual additions, the dire state of English learning prompted the printer to issue the poem and also prompted an outburst from 'Robert Copland boke prynter to new fanglers':

So many lerned at leest they say they be
Was neuer sene / doynge so fewe good werkes.
.
.
.
For lacke of wrytynge / conteynyng morall sperkes
I must imprynt the parlament of foules.

The problems Copland describes have particular implications for the book producer:

Dytees / and letters them can I make my selfe
Of suche ynowe ben dayly to me brought
Olde morall bokes stonde styll vpon the shelve
I am in fere they wyll neuer be bought
Tryfles and toyes they ben the thynges so sought.

⁵³ See Erler, 'Printers' Copy', and my discussion of the sources for Pynson's edition of this text below.

The solution must be found in *old* books:

Bound with olde quayres / for aege all hoore *and* grene
 Thy mater endormed / for lacke of thy presence
 But nowe thou art losed / go shewe forth thy sentence
 And where thou become so ordre thy language
 That in excuse thy prynter loke thou haue
 Whiche hathe the kepte frome ruynous damage
 In snowe wyte paper / thy mater for to saue
 With thylke same langage that Chaucer to the gauē.⁵⁴

The title-page also ascribes the text: 'Here foloweth the assemble of foules veray pleasaunt and compendyouys to rede or here compyled by the preclared and famous clerke Geffray Chaucer' (A1r). It bears a scholar woodcut that shows a clerk working, thinking, or perhaps dreaming in front of his books (see Fig. 15). The image is familiar: it derives from woodcuts used by French printers, and ultimately from manuscripts containing the writings of patristic scholars such as Jerome.⁵⁵ It appears to be a visual realization of Chaucer's clerkly self-representation within his text. However, given the scholar's gloomy and rather disengaged pose, the woodcut may also be meant to depict the sixteenth-century book producer whose verses of complaint open the book. Author and book producer will *together* give value to a work by sorting the 'olde ... book', a 'preclared and famous' one, from new-fangled 'tryfles and toyes'. They will save the printed book from any imputation of 'ruynous damage' and send forth moral works to sliding, changeable 'newfangers' in the hope of their redemption. The printing press and the author facilitate the recovery of all that is good from the literary past.

The point made by De Worde and Copland is deliberately ironic. Given its erotic content and the broad debate about the nature of love in which it joins, the 1530 *Parliament* belongs to the same bibliographical world as De Worde's *Troilus*. The author is a thin moral guise for a text that inhabits the commercial context for amorous fiction in print. Mary C. Erler, who has edited Copland's poem and who first noted that Bodl.

⁵⁴ Robert Copland: *Poems*, *The Assemble of Foules*, 'To new fanglers', 17–18, 20–8, 'Lenuoy', 11–12.

⁵⁵ See Hodnett, *English Woodcuts, 1480–1535*, no. 926. De Worde used it for grammars by John Stanbridge and the Latin original of *Stans Puer ad Mensam*. On the image in French books, for instance in André de la Vigné's *Vergier d'honneur*, printed by Pierre le Dru in Paris 1502–4, see Brown, *Poets, Patrons, and Printers*, ch. 3, fig. 3.2. See Rice, *St Jerome in the Renaissance*, 104–13, on influential manuscript images of this scholar-author.

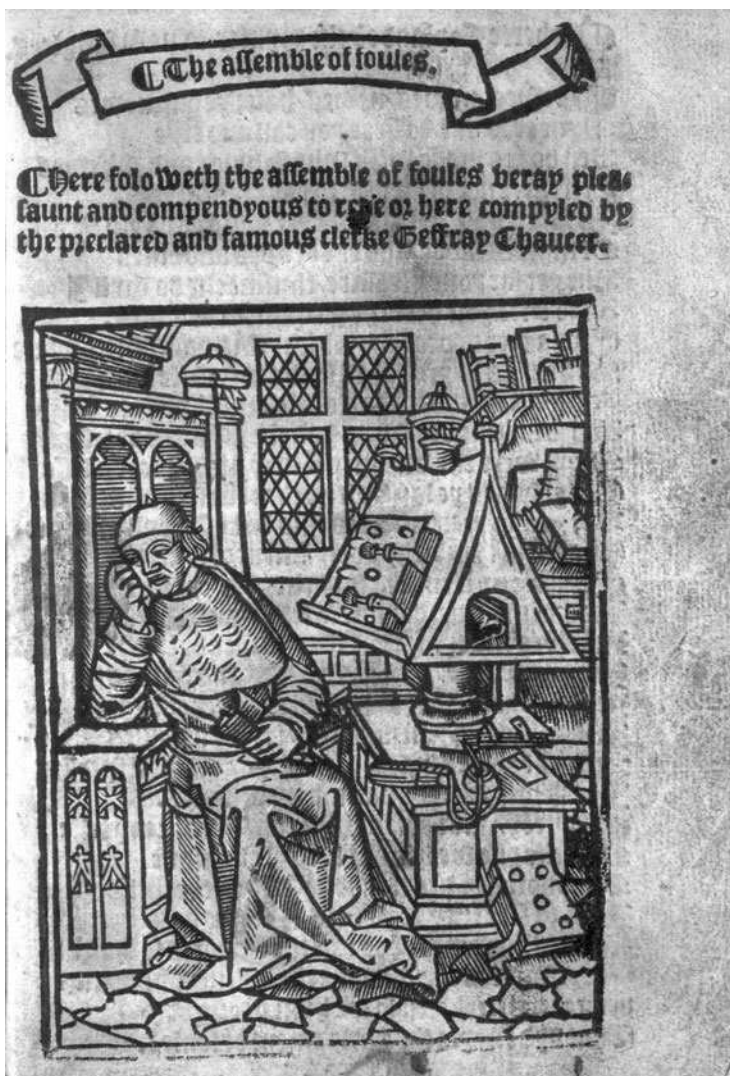


Figure 15. San Marino, Calif., Huntington Library, 31325: Chaucer's *Parliament of Fowls* (printed by Wynkyn de Worde, 1530), STC 5092, A1r. Reproduced by permission of The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

Bodley 638 was De Worde's copy text, takes the prefatorial verses very much at their word. Copland's main interest, she argues, is the 'central moral function' of poetry and the

faded and defaced manuscript [of Copland's poem] ... can be identified as Oxford Bodley 638 which had 'leues al to torne' (large portions of Bo's ff 71, 197, and 201 are missing, and corners are torn off its ff 15, 16, 19, 61, 92, 198, 202, 203, 205). Further, the manuscript is said to be 'with wormes all to worne': wormholes appear on ff 2–5, 62–5, 92–6.⁵⁶

De Worde and Copland work their magic: Erler recognizes the book that they saved from the ravages of time; it has survived wholly unchanged since 1530. It has the same 'faded' forms, 'to torne' leaves, and worm holes. The reader need not distinguish between the '[o]lde morall bokes' described in paratextual rhetoric, the new book they have bought, and books like Bodley 638.

The paratextual additions made by Copland and De Worde to *The Parliament*, like Rastell's verses, are 'no stronge cloth of defence'. Printing is not a steady glow cast upon ruinous darkness. It is an opportunity for the book producer to generate 'morall sperkes' as light and bibliographical and literary meanings are refracted and scattered across many different books and texts: ascribed versions of Chaucer's *Parliament of Fowls*; 'all other that he made'; and all the others printed by De Worde and his contemporaries. The business of textual production is akin—as in the 1517 *Troilus* and in the Farmer *Sammelband*—to the multiple, debateable meanings for love that are described in 'Lenuoy' to the 1530 *Parliament*:

And yf a louer happen on the to rede
 Let be the goos with his lewde sentence
 Vnto the turtle and not to her to take hede
 For who so chaungeth / true loue dothe offence
 Loue as I rede is floure of excellence
 And loue also is rote of wretchednesse
 Thus be two loues / scryture bereth wytnesse.

(*'Lenuoy'*, 15–21)

Erler proposes the correction of Copland's 'his' in line 16 to 'her'. Such an emendation makes good sense, but even as it stands the lines offer

⁵⁶ *Robert Copland: Poems*, 15, 139–40. I must thank a student of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, Natalie Landaw-Mott, who first alerted me to the suggestiveness of this passage.

an attractive conclusion to the poem. The reader should ignore the goose's words to the turtle dove, and pay no attention to 'her'—the turtle—either. In Chaucer's poem, the goose declares, 'But she wol love hym, lat hym love another' (l. 567); the turtle dove, 'Nay, God forbede a love-re shulde chaunge' (l. 582). The lover who reads *The Parliament* in the Copland–De Worde edition is told to heed neither bird. Love is a catalogue of things good and bad, excellent and wretched, its meaning not settled but something shifting and sliding in-between.

PYNSON'S 1526 CHAUCER EDITIONS AND *LA QUERELLE DES FEMMES*

The unresolved debate of the turtle dove and the goose does remind us that important matters are at stake amid the spectacles of Tudor and medieval love poetry in print. The Chaucerian play I have just described, evident in editions of his texts, unsettles any effort to describe the steady or enlightening purpose of the printing press—let alone the discovery of profit in amorous, fictional texts. Traditional hierarchies, Christian truth, feminine virtue, and moral books are all subject to subversion. In such contexts, Chaucer's texts were perhaps in need of some 'stronge cloth of defence': new and more serious paratextual frameworks, or some physical format other than flimsy pamphlets or bawdy *Sammelbände* that could be assembled at the whim of a consumer.

This is one way to think about Richard Pynson's approach to a group of Chaucerian poems in the mid-1520s. *STC* describes Pynson's 1526 editions of *The Canterbury Tales*, *Troilus and Criseyde*, and *The House of Fame* (with other poems) as 'the 1st ed. of Chaucer's Works'.⁵⁷ The term trade *Sammelbände* may be more accurate here: Pynson and other retailers who handled his books appear to have routinely sold copies of all three of these separate editions together, perhaps in ready-bound volumes.⁵⁸ The bookseller, rather than the book buyer, was

⁵⁷ Respectively, *STC* 5086, 1526, *IMEV* 4019; *STC* 5096, 1526? *IMEV* 3327; and *IMEV* 5088, 1526? *IMEV* 991, and the additional items listed below.

⁵⁸ Of the complete surviving copies of Pynson's 1526 editions noticed by *STC*, all but two copies of *The Canterbury Tales* are extant in *Sammelbände* (six in total). Detailed descriptions of these volumes are available in Foley (ed.), 'Richard Pynson's *Boke of Fame* and Its Non-Chaucerian Poems'. My preliminary examination of the

responsible for selecting the contents of such volumes. Certain kinds of decisions, including those represented by the Farmer *Sammelband*, were precluded. In the 1526 Pynson 'edition' the author is said to preside over the producer's decisions. The title page to *The House of Fame* declares that it was 'made by Geffray Chaucer: with dyuers other of his workes' (see Fig. 16)—

The Parliament of Fowls (a version of the text as printed in 1530 by De Worde with at least one reading from Rastell's edition and readings from an unidentified manuscript);⁵⁹

La Belle Dame sans Mercy (with 'Lenuoy de limprimeur', E3v)⁶⁰

'Truth' (entitled 'Ecce bonum consilium Galfredi Chaucer / contra fortunam [Behold the good counsel of Chaucer against fortune]' on E4r)

*The morale prouerbes of Cristyne*⁶¹

*The complaynte of the louer of cryst Saynt mary Magdaleyn*⁶²

The letter of Dydo to Eneas (a unique Tudor text, perhaps printed from manuscript)

Lydgate, 'Consulo Quisquis Eris' (with the running title 'Prouerbes of Lydgate', F5v–6r).⁶³

volumes produced no particular evidence of the independent circulation of any item; nor, however, do I have proof of the in-house binding of the books (on this and on *Sammelbände* I am sure Pynson sold ready-bound, see Gillespie, 'Poets, Printers, and Early English *Sammelbände*'). I would argue that Pynson and others probably sold some copies separately, but that the survival of such an unprecedented number of copies bound together suggests a significant, coordinated effort to market them together.

⁵⁹ IMEV 3412. See Mukai, 'Richard Pynson's 1526 Edition of *The Parliament of Fowls*'; 'The Prologue, Text and Epilogue of De Worde-Copland's Edition of *The Parliament of Fowls*'; and Erler, 'Printers' Copy', who concludes that Pynson introduced some readings from Rastell and from a manuscript but used Bodl. Bodley 638 as copy text, and that De Worde then used the same manuscript and occasionally a copy of Pynson's edition for his version. Pynson's death at the end of 1529 may well have made exemplars from his shop available to other printers; however, another explanation appeals to me. Pynson used as copy a lost edition of De Worde's *Parliament* that had been printed from Bodley 638 before 1526. The marks in the 1530 De Worde edition match those left by the compositor in the manuscript, but these may simply indicate that the posited, earlier edition(s) had the same page-by-page format as the 1530 edition. Regardless, Pynson, if not De Worde, expended some effort to draw together sources for his text.

⁶⁰ IMEV 1086, ascribed to Richard Roos in Bodl. Harley 372; see Seaton, *Sir Richard Roos* c. 1410–1482, 80–102.

⁶¹ IMEV 3372.1, from Caxton's 1478 edition, STC 7273.

⁶² IMEV 2759, from De Worde's 1520? edition, STC 17568 or one like it.

⁶³ IMEV 1294. This and 'Truth' (and its rubric) were taken from a De Worde edition of *The prouerbes of Lydgate*, which is discussed in detail in Ch. 4.

The accretion of apocryphal and genuine texts here renders Chaucer a consummate love poet, and it does so in the terms of a famous French debate about love and poetry, *la querelle des femmes*. The debate is most clearly signalled in this book by *La Belle Dame*, an English version of a well-known fifteenth-century French poem by Alain Chartier. At the time of its composition, this poem prompted revival of the c.1400 quarrel between Christine de Pisan and Jean Gerson, Chancellor of the University of Paris, detractors of Jean de Meun and his misogynist reworking of Guillaume de Lorris's *Roman de la Rose*, and various supporters of De Meun, including two secretaries to the French king.⁶⁴ In 1424 Chartier's *Belle Dame* likewise prompted a flurry of responses: nearly twenty extant poems consider the character or consequences of Chartier's poem.⁶⁵ Pynson adds an envoy to his edition which takes a side in the famous quarrel—and his part is, notably, the woman's part. His 1526 envoy recasts *La Belle Dame*. Women cease to be pitiless, and become themselves pitiable as they endeavour to defend themselves against would-be seducers and defamation:

For he that by wordes / or giftes doth pursue
To depriue a woman her best iewel
As her good name & fame / & chaste vertu
Is signe of no good loue.

(E3v)

Pynson, named at the last as printer to the king, is here cast in his best Norman guise as 'limprimeur'. The French printer suggests that men should stop pursuing women, and, moreover, stop construing them as pitiless, rather than properly virtuous for resisting their lovers' lascivious advances. The points he makes are among the first in De Pisan's *Epistre au Dieu d'amours*, which was perhaps the first blow of the French quarrel.⁶⁶ Pynson establishes a direct connection with De Pisan on the facing page, where some 'Morall prouerbes' exhort all readers to the virtue exemplified by the new ending to *La Belle Dame*, '[t]o haunt vertues / and vyces to banysshe (E4r). The text is from Anthony Woodville, Earl Rivers's translation of De Pisan's text in Caxton's 1478 edition but Caxton's

⁶⁴ For the original quarrel, see Minnis, *Magister Amoris*, 209–34, and Baird and Kane (eds. and trans.), *La Querelle de la Rose*.

⁶⁵ See McRae (ed.), *Alain Chartier*.

⁶⁶ See Erler and Fenster (eds.), *Poems of Cupid, God of Love*.

ascription of the lines to Earl Rivers is deliberately omitted. These are explicitly the sayings of the French poetess 'Christyne' (E4r).

The link with French traditions is sustained elsewhere. Pynson's French title nods to the continental influences on his work as well as literary tradition and his own Norman heritage. Julia Boffey, who first noticed this book as a collection of poems on the theme of courtly love and the virtue of women, describes woodcuts borrowed or bought from the Parisian printer Anthoine Vérard and used in the edition; she also identifies one of Vérard's books as the most likely source text for the translation of *The letter of Dydo*.⁶⁷ The shape of the book itself mimics those printed collections of Chartier's poems of *fin amour*, that, like Chaucer's, began to accumulate significant apocryphal additions in the early sixteenth century.⁶⁸ The content and illustrations of Pynson's chosen texts bind his pro-feminist position in place. The book unites a poem to Mary Magdalene who was, as Boffey notes, a model for female affective piety and love of Christ in the later Middle Ages, with a letter from Dido, a true and deserted female lover and a positive *exemplum* of female constancy in Pisan's *Epistre* as well as *The House of Fame* (see ll. 241–382). The *Parliament of Fowls* is also a quarrel over women and about love, and, in the 1526 *House of Fame*, all of these texts follow a single, controlling image, a unique title-page woodcut that depicts Fame as she appears in Chaucer's *House of Fame*: a queen who adjudicates literary endeavours. She holds out two banners beneath the 'sterres seven' that light her court on which are lozenges—the distinctive form of escutcheons bearing the heraldic insignia of unmarried noble or armigerous gentlewomen (see Fig. 16).⁶⁹

The bibliographical traditions that lie behind Pynson's work are equally suggestive. Roos's translation of *La Belle Dame*, which survives in no other early printed edition, is extant in many Chaucerian manuscript

⁶⁷ See Boffey, 'Richard Pynson's *Book of Fame* and *The Letter of Dido*', 346. The letter is a translation of Octavien de Saint-Gelais's *Les xxj epistres douide*, which was printed by Vérard, 1500–3.

⁶⁸ On French printed collections of Chartier's poems, see Hoffman, *Alain Chartier*, Appendix B, and Walravens, *Alain Chartier*, ch. 14. Vérard printed a collected edition, 1493–4. All early editions are notable for their apocrypha.

⁶⁹ See *House of Fame*, ll. 1374–6. The woodcut is Hodnett, *English Woodcuts, 1480–1535*, no. 1500. The use of lozenges for the arms of unmarried women continues to this day. Chaucer describes lozenges on the robes of the God of Love (following *Roman de la Rose*) in *Romaunt of the Rose*, l. 893.

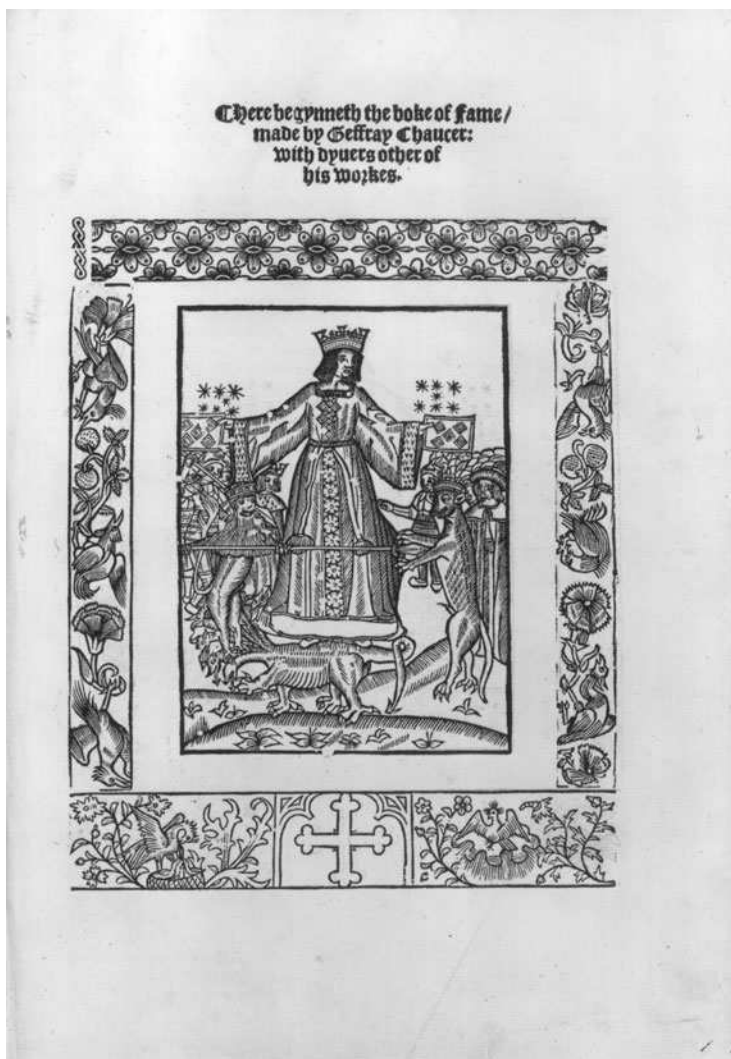


Figure 16. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard College Library, Houghton Library, HEW 5. 11. 8: Chaucer's *House of Fame* (printed by Richard Pynson, 1526?), STC 5088, A1r. Reproduced with the permission of the Harry Elkins Widener Collection, Harvard College Library.

miscellanies.⁷⁰ Pynson may also have used a manuscript for *The letter of Dydo* but, as I suggest above, he made ranging use of printed books as well: Caxton's *House of Fame* (as well as his *Troilus* and *Canterbury Tales* for the other items in the 1526 *Sammelbände*) and De Worde's editions of *Mary Magdaleyn* and *The prouerbes of Lydgate*. Nonce or consumer-assembled *Sammelbände*—their forms displaced by the trade volumes issued by Pynson—may have served as copy text. A *Sammelband* described in Chapter 2 once contained Caxton's 1483 *House of Fame*, his 1483 translation and edition of Chartier's *Curial*, and Pisan's *Morale prouerbes*, the last entitled 'Chawser' in an early modern hand.⁷¹ *The Parliament of Fowls* was bound with 'Truth' in the *Sammelband* owned by George Ferrers and described in Chapter 1. De Worde promoted quarto editions of Tudor verse like his 1517 *Troilus* as the component parts of printed anthologies like the Farmer *Sammelband* and not unlike, in terms of content, the 1526 *House of Fame*.

Pynson's work on his wide-ranging sources is rather like his feminism. The 1526 Chaucer 'edition' collects examples of texts from various manuscript and printed traditions, collates them in the case of *The Parliament of Fowls*, and frames and binds these texts as a singular entity. It holds the book, and the women it describes, in place. The perils of fiction—the sliding meanings and elusive truths printed in editions of Chaucerian verse by Copland, De Worde, and Rastell—are diminished in Pynson's edition. *The House of Fame* begins with Caxton's version of that text, and Pynson, who edited out Caxton's epilogue ascribing *The morale prouerbes of Cristyne* to Woodville, edits Caxton's epilogue to the Chaucerian text in. In this way he makes his own printed book a stable outcome for the radically destabilizing liaison of truth and falsehood that Caxton describes in that epilogue and that I described in Chapter 1. The envoy to *La Belle Dame*—the conclusion of 'limprimeur', 'Love god aboue althing / & than do ye well' (E3v)—forms a kind of centrepiece for *The House of Fame* (see Fig. 17). The transition from this text to the moralized forms of Pisan's proverbs operates across 'Truth' which is introduced on E3v as 'certayne morall prouerbes' before it is entitled 'bonum consilium' on E4r and that contains Chaucer's imperative to

⁷⁰ Some of these are 'Oxford' Chaucer manuscripts: Bodl. Fairfax 16 and Wiltshire, Longleat Library, 258. There is also a copy in the commercially produced codex, Camb. Trinity R. 3. 19.

⁷¹ The ascription appears in JRL 12025; Hellinga and Nickson, 'A Caxton Tract-Volume from Thomas Rawlinson's Library', reproduce an early contents list which ascribes these proverbs to Christ.

the courtier: 'dwelle with sothfastnesse' ('Truth', l. 1). And the 1526 *House of Fame* comes to an end with Lydgate's 'Consulo Quisquis Eris'. Lydgate's work is not about women nor, given its running title naming Lydgate, can it be one of Chaucer's 'dyuers ... workes'. It fits neither Pynson's authorial or pro-feminist schemes. However, like *The House of Fame*, it satirizes opportunistic linguistic alliances:

This litel ditee concludith in menyng,
 Who that cast hym this rewle for to kepe,
 Mot conforme hym lyke in euery thyng,
 Wher he shal byde, vnto the felashipe;
 With wachmen wake; with sloggy folkes sleepe;
 With wood men wood; with frentyk folk savage;
 Renne with beestys; with wilde wormys creepe;
 And like the audience vtir thy language.⁷²

Unlike *The House of Fame*, Lydgate's text comes to a stable conclusion and the reader comes to the end of Pynson's book. The refrain changes; the author appeals to his readers' love of Christ; and tells them 'Wher vertu regnyth, *ther* vtir thy language' (l. 64, emphasis added). Pynson has defined 'ther' in bibliographical, pro-feminist, and authorial terms. He has drawn texts from various places to a single, paratextually determined place. This is a Chaucerian book, these are 'dyuers other' of his works. As a collection of utterances about women, this book will find in their favour. As a collection of fictional utterances, it will appeal to a largely disambiguated conception of Christian love. As a book, this 'edition'—those copies of the illustrated folio editions that were bound together—will not merely eschew any perceived stigma in the profit-making operation of the press, it will absolutely exceed the value of penny-worth printed pamphlets.⁷³ Pynson's business, like De Worde's, depended on the purchasing power of multiple readers. This book risked something new—a preference for virtue over erotic love, literary 'truth' over literary 'toyes', and authorized, expensive, Chaucerian books over

⁷² *Minor Poems of John Lydgate: Part II*, 'Consulo Quisquis Eris', ll. 49–56.

⁷³ Assuming a very generous $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per sheet, the retail price of a folio *Sammelband* of this size (105 sheets) unbound was about 4s. in the period; binding would increase this to over 5s. (see Bennett, 'Notes on English Retail Book-Prices, 1480–1560'). This is about the same as for a copy of Thynne's *Workes* (see below). Even a substantial pamphlet such as the 1517 *Troilus* (35 sheets) would be worth only about 1s. unbound, and *Parliament of Fowls* pamphlets (3–4 sheets) not much more than 'a peny' or two. See my comments and caveats on book prices in Ch. 2.

bibliographical forms for texts that turned utterances over to the hands of their readers.

CHAUCER'S *WORKES* OF 1532 AND THE TUDOR COURT

It is a short step, one might think, from Pynson's 'ther' to Chaucer's *Workes* of 1532. That which is hinted at in Rastell's version of the *Parliament of Fowls*, joked about in De Worde's *Troilus*, carefully negotiated by Caxton and by Pynson, is realized in this often-discussed volume.⁷⁴ The *Workes* is a several-hundred page tome, containing 21,000 lines of 'apocryphal' verse as well as almost all the texts still thought to be Chaucer's.⁷⁵ It was printed by Thomas Godfray in an unusual continental fount in 1532;⁷⁶ materials and probably financing for the edition were provided by the man who is described by Leland as its publisher and became king's printer some time after Pynson's death

⁷⁴ STC 5068. A facsimile of Camb. Clare K. 1. 7 gives the order of contents (Brewer (ed.), *Geoffrey Chaucer. The Works, 1532*). The book contains: Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, IMEV 4019; *Romaunt of the Rose*, IMEV 2092; *Troilus and Criseyde*, IMEV 3327; *The Legend of Good Women*, IMEV 100; *Boece*; *The Book of the Duchess*, IMEV 1306; 'Lenvoy de Chaucer a Bukton', IMEV 2262; *The Parliament of Fowls*, IMEV 3412; 'The Complaint unto Pity', IMEV 3414; *Anelida and Arcite*, IMEV 3670; *The Treatise of the Astrolabe*; *The House of Fame*, IMEV 991; *The Complaint of Mars* and *The Complaint of Venus* IMEV 913 and 3542; 'Lak of Stedfastnesse', IMEV 3190; 'Truth', IMEV 809; 'Fortune', IMEV 3661; 'Lenvoy de Chaucer a Scogan', IMEV 3747; and 'To His Purse', IMEV 3787. Apocryphal items are: Scogan's 'Moral Balade', IMEV 2264 with Chaucer's 'Gentilesse'; Lydgate's 'Floure of Curtesy', IMEV 1487, *The Complaint of the Black Knight*, IMEV 1507, 'Balade in Commendation of Our Lady', IMEV 99, and 'Wikked Tongue', IMEV 653; Henryson's *Testament of Cresseid*, IMEV 285, a late addition to the book; Hoccleve's 'Ballad au tres noble Roy Henry', IMEV 3788, and *L'epistre de Cupid*, IMEV 666; Roos's *La Belle Dame sans Mercy*, IMEV 1086; Usk's *Testament of Love*; Gower's 'In Praise of Peace', IMEV 2587; Clanvowe's *Book of Cupid*, IMEV 3361. The book also has minor poems still unasccribed, some printed in earlier Chaucer editions and described above: 'Eight Goodly Questions', IMEV 3183; 'Whan feyth failleth', IMEV 3943; 'Hit cometh by kynde of gentil blode', IMEV 1618; 'Hit falleth for every gentelman', IMEV 1619; *The complainyte of... mary Magdaleyn*, IMEV 2759; 'To his Lady Margaret', IMEV 2223; *The Boke called Assemblede de Damys*, IMEV 1528; 'A Praise of Women', IMEV 228; 'The Remedy of Love', IMEV 3084; 'Ballade with an Envoy to Alison', IMEV 2479; 'Duodecim Abusiones', IMEV 920. Chaucer's epitaph is also printed at the end of the book (see Ch. 1).

⁷⁵ The figure is from Miskimin, *The Renaissance Chaucer*, 230.

⁷⁶ On the fount, familiar from humanist English but 'vulgar' continental editions, see Dane, *Who is Buried in Chaucer's Tomb?*, 65–72.

in 1529, Thomas Berthelet.⁷⁷ Berthelet edited and printed an edition of Gower's *Confessio Amantis* in 1532 where, in prefatorial praise and a biography for the writer, he takes the time to promote not only the reference to Gower in Chaucer's *Troilus*, but Godfray's edition:

The whiche noble warke, and many other of the sayde Chausers, that neuer were before imprinted, & those that very fewe men knewe, and fewer hadde them, be nowe of late put forthe together in a fayre volume.⁷⁸

The *Workes* came to the reader in 1532 edited by William Thynne, who held the important office of clerk of Henry VIII's kitchen.⁷⁹ The book is dedicated by Thynne (as was the *Confessio* by Berthelet) to

the kynges hyghnesse / my most gracious soueraygne lorde Henry the eight / by the grace of god kyng of Englande and of Fraunce / defensor of the fayth / and lorde of Irland. &c. (A2r)

The dedication follows a title-page framed by a border that was copied from one designed by Hans Holbein and used for the Johan Froben edition of Erasmus's *Epigrammata* that was printed with More's *Utopia* and some of More's own epigrams in 1518 (see Fig. 18).⁸⁰ The wording of the Chaucer title-page is as follows:

The workes of Geffray Chaucer newly printed / with dyuers workes whiche were neuer in print before: As in the table more playnly dothe appere. Cum priuilegio. (A1r)

The 1532 *Workes* are one logical outcome of previous attempts to assemble Chaucer's works in the early sixteenth century, and of Pynson's efforts to draw together vernacular verse scattered across a range of manuscript and printed books in particular. Chaucer is a category grand enough, and convenient enough, to accommodate the writings of other medieval authors: Gower's 'Praise of Peace' and Scogan's 'Morale

⁷⁷ Leland's knowing account (Berthelet is 'Bertholetus noster') is Bodl. Top. Gen. C. 4, fol. 160r (see Hammond, *Chaucer*, 4). For an account of Godfray's use of Berthelet's materials, see Wawn, 'Chaucer, *The Plowman's Tale* and Reformation Propaganda'. Berthelet and Godfray also worked together during an alleged armed assault of the printer John Rastell in 1530 (Blayney, *The Stationers' Company before the Charter*, 31).

⁷⁸ STC 12143, 2A3v. On this edition, see Echard, 'Pre-Texts', and Machan, 'Thomas Berthelette and Gower's *Confessio Amantis*'.

⁷⁹ See Blodgett, 'William Thynne (d. 1546)', and Costomiris, 'Some New Light on the Early Career of William Thynne, Chief Clerk of the Kitchen of Henry VIII and Editor of Chaucer'.

⁸⁰ Ferguson and McKerrow, *Title-Page Borders Used in England & Scotland, 1485–1640*, no. 19. See Carlson, *English Humanist Books*, 142–62, on More–Erasmus epigrams and the *Utopia* of 1518.

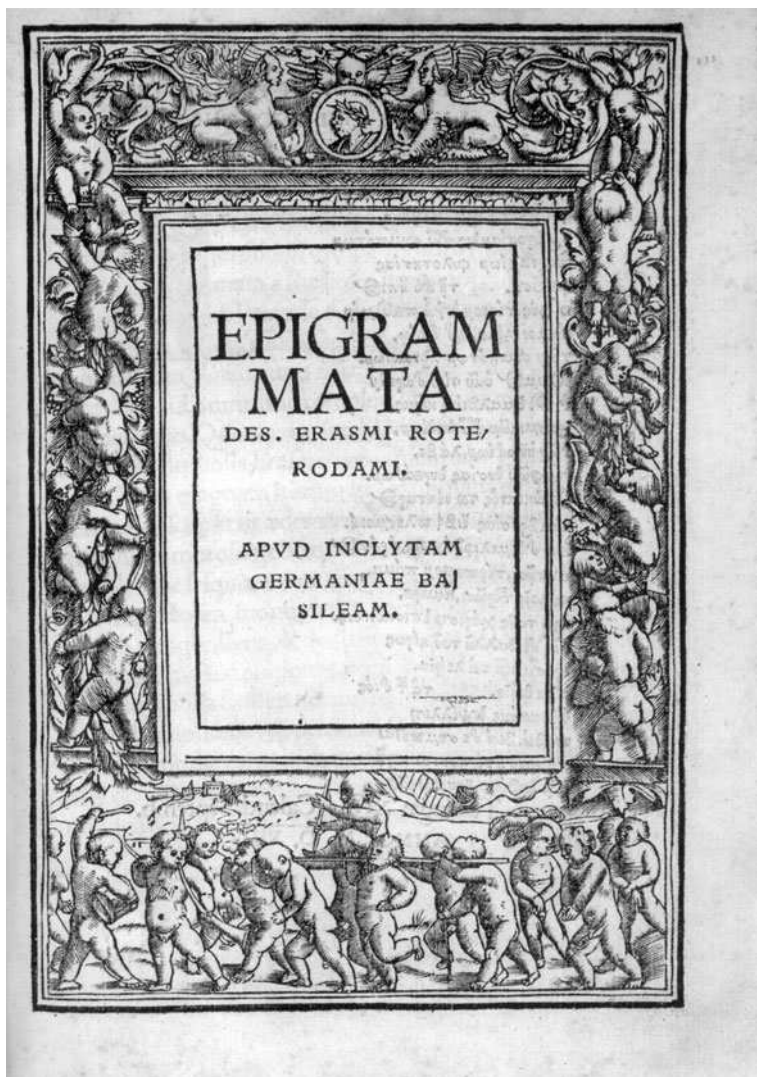


Figure 18. San Marino, Calif., Huntington Library, 88397: Erasmus's *Epigrammata* (printed in Basle by Johannes Froben, 1518), L1r.

Balade' are not merely included, they are correctly ascribed.⁸¹ The print-producer describes a stable identity for the book, one derived from the person of the author and the idea of his works that may accommodate all sorts of old vernacular texts. The forms of the book not only, in McKenzie's terms, 'effect' meaning, they fully disclose that meaning. The reader should turn to the 'table', where things 'more playnly doth appere'.⁸²

The appearance of the 1532 *Workes* of Chaucer raises a number of points of discussion for students of the sixteenth-century book trade. The book was—as the printer's use of a Basle border suggests—influenced by continental trends in book production. Editions of large folio *opera* of classical and patristic Latin *auctores* were commonplace in the major printing centres of Europe, as such books had been in the learned manuscripts of monasteries and universities.⁸³ Copies of printed *opera* can be found in surviving English sale catalogues and library lists of the first few decades of the sixteenth century.⁸⁴ Meanwhile the *œuvres* of such vernacular authors as Dante Alighieri and Alain Chartier had found a place in print.⁸⁵ Chartier's collected works seem especially relevant to Chaucer's *Workes*. Seven editions had appeared before 1529, all of them under a version of the heading *Le faicts et dictz*, as seen in Galloit du Pré's 1526 edition. Three years later, Pierre Vidoue, printing for Du

⁸¹ 'In Praise of Peace' is titled uniquely by Thynne as 'Johan Gower / vnto the worthy and noble kynge Henry the fourth' (3T4v). Scogan's poem is entitled (following Caxton's edition described in Ch. 1): 'Scogan / vnto the lordes and gentylnen of the kynges house' (3V3r).

⁸² McKenzie, *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts*, 13. For comparable comment on this book, see Yeager, 'Literary Theory at the Close of the Middle Ages'; Miskimin, *The Renaissance Chaucer*, 242–7; Edwards, 'Chaucer from Manuscript to Print'. For further bibliographical information, see, among other studies, Hetherington, *Chaucer 1532–1602*; Costomiris, 'The Influence of Printed Editions and Manuscripts on the Canon of William Thynne's *Canterbury Tales*' and 'Bodleian MS Tanner 346 and William Thynne's Edition of Clanvowe's "Cuckoo and the Nightingale"'; Blodgett, 'Some Printer's Copy for William Thynne's 1532 Edition of Chaucer'; Baker, 'William Thynne's Printing of the *Squire's Tale*'; Findlayson, 'Textual Variants in Chaucer's *House of Fame*'; and Donaghey, 'Wylliam Thynne's Collected Edition of Chaucer'.

⁸³ A useful impression may be gathered from *ISTC* (for pre-1500 books), s.v. 'opera'.

⁸⁴ For examples see Fehrenbach and Leedham-Green, *Private Libraries in Renaissance England*.

⁸⁵ French vernacular authors' translations started appearing in editions under the word 'œuvres' in 1500 with Laurent de Premierfait's translation of Seneca's *Les euuues* by Anthoine Vérard (Paris, c.1500) (Brown, *Poets, Patrons, and Printers*, 20). Richardson, *Print Culture in Renaissance Italy*, 242–50 lists early Italian Dante and Petrarch editions.

Pré, changed tactics slightly, issuing the same poems with the title page *Les oeuvres fue maistre Alain chartier*.⁸⁶

But my interests bring me rather closer to Thynne, Godfray, and Berthelet's home. The title-page border used in 1532 was originally commissioned by Berthelet as a copy of Froben's original for his edition *Grauiissimae ... totius Italiae et Galliae Academicarum censurae*—the learned and favourable (from Henry's perspective) 'determinations' of university men upon the great matter of the king's divorce (see Fig. 19).⁸⁷ It was used after 1532 for statutes, proclamations, and an edition of a translation by John Bouchier, Lord Berners, former commissioner of Calais, uncle of Henry's favourite Sir Francis Bryan, to whom Berners dedicated this *Golden boke of Marcus Aurelius*.⁸⁸ The locus for meaning in the *Workes* is Chaucer, but the cultural framework within which the book is *most* meaningful seems courtly and specifically Henrician: the forms of the book suggest, time and again, the authority of the king and those who serve him, as well as the medieval author.

Leaving the more complicated matter of the impact of religious change on this book to the last chapter, the conclusions that follow from this evidence are straightforward. Like Caxton's *Recuyell ... of Troye* or Pynson's 1526 Chaucer 'edition', the 1532 Chaucer enunciates its own purpose. Its producer defends the ability of the press to produce more than profit, more, even, than a late-feudal 'fee' from a king (Thynne was the recipient of just such rewards during his courtly career). The printed book promotes, as the preface explains, the 'renoume of such noble princes and valyant conquerours' of England as Henry VIII himself (A2v). That 'renoume' is established in part through English literary sovereignty, a culture that promoted linguistic excellence, and as such angelic, but also human, reason. Of all the qualities

wher *with* almighty god hath endowed mankynde / aboute *the* resydue of erthly creatures / as an outwarde declaration of reason or resonableness / wherin consysteth the symilitude of man vnto aungels / and the difference betwene the same & brute beestes / I verayly suppose / that speche or language is nat to be reputed amonges the smallest or inferiours ... And verayly / lyke as all [other nations] haue ben thus vigilant & studyous to meliorate or amende their langages: so hath there nat lacked amonges vs Englysshe men / whiche haue right

⁸⁶ See Walravens, *Alain Chartier*, 222–9.

⁸⁷ STC 14286, 1530. This is Berthelet's Latin version of his *Determinations*, STC 14287. See Warner, *Henry VIII's Divorce*, 22–3, and Murphy, 'The Literature and Propaganda of Henry VIII's First Divorce'.

⁸⁸ STC 12436.

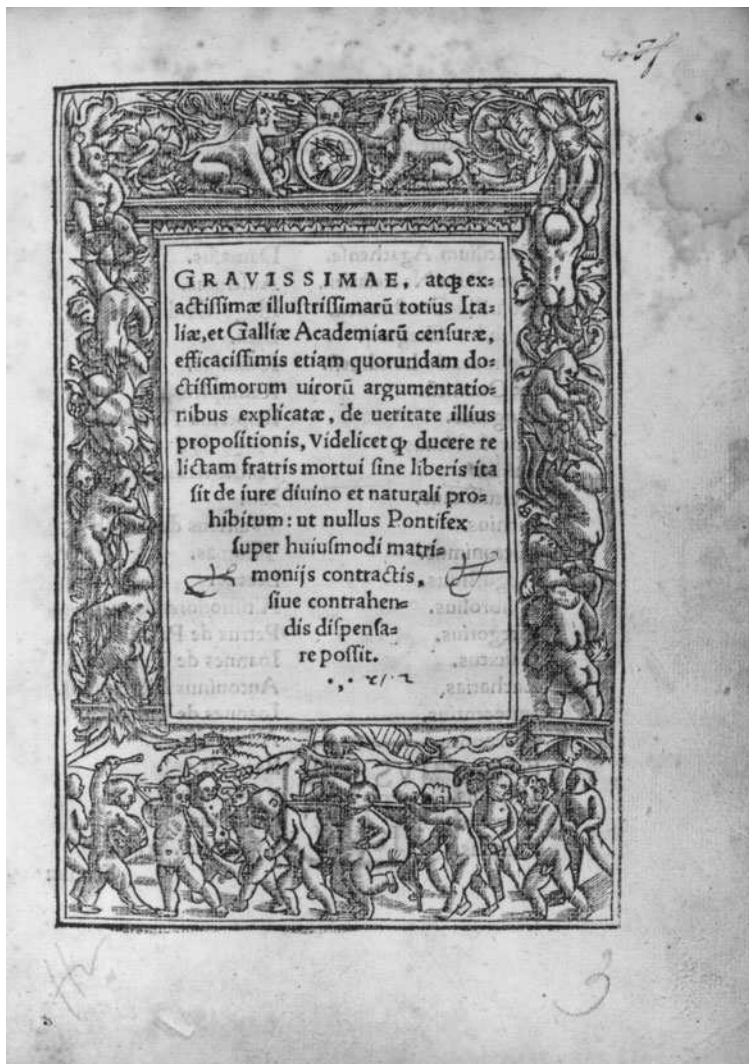


Figure 19. British Library, Humanities, C. 37. f. 2. *Grauiissimæ, . . . totius Italiae et Galliae Academicarum censuræ* (printed by Thomas Berthelet, 1530), STC 14286, A1r. Reproduced with the permission of the British Library.

well and notably endeuyred and employed them selues / to the beautifyeng and bettryng of thenglysh tonge. (A2r–v)

The book is envisaged as it is in De Worde's 1495 *Policronicon* and Rastell and Copland's verses in editions of *The Parliament of Fowls*. It saves the best of a nation's identity, its 'language'—'workes of memory'—from decay and darkness. It

reduc[es] vnto lyght this so precious and necessary an ornament of the tonge of this your realme / ... So that vnder the shyld of your most royall protectyon and defence it may go forthe in publyke / & preuayle ouer those that wolde blemyshe / deface / and in many thynges clerely abolyssh the laude / renoume / and glorie hertofore ... adquired by dyuers princes / and other of this said most noble yle. (A3r)

The meaning of an utterance is reduced and then shielded and protected within this close paratextual definition of a 'publyke', published book.

Some evidence of ownership in a copy of Chaucer's *Workes* provides more information about the basis for the 1532 edition's show of 'reason or resonableness'. The Clare College copy of the *Workes* is signed on A2r by the Treasurer of the Chamber and Secretary to Henry VIII, Sir Brian Tuke:

This preface I sir Bryan Tuke knight wrot at the request of mister clarke of the kechyn then being / taryng for the tyd at Grenewiche.⁸⁹

The statement is not, as has been suggested, at odds with the description of 'I your most humble vassal / subiecte and seruauant Wylliam Thynne' in the preface itself.⁹⁰ A paragraph at the end of the humanist history of 'speche or langage'—which may suggest Tuke's knowledge of such texts as Dante's *De vulgari eloquentia* and Bembo's *Prosa della volgar lingua*⁹¹—divides this text from Thynne's text about his own efforts to bring 'agayne to lyghte' Chaucer's writings from scattered manuscripts and early editions (A2v). Tuke's own account of his authorship of the first part of the preface is verified by John Leland in his entry on Chaucer in his unpublished *Scriptores*; in 1532 Leland was a royal

⁸⁹ Camb. Clare K. 1. 7. On Tuke's career, see Carter, 'Tuke, Sir Brian (d. 1545)'.

⁹⁰ Dane, *Who is Buried in Chaucer's Tomb?*, 39–43.

⁹¹ Printed editions of Dante's text were available by 1532, such as that printed by Tolomeo Ianiculo in Venice, 1529, and Giovanni Tacuino first printed *Prosa di M. Pietro Bembo ... della volgar lingua* in Venice, 1525. Tuke's ideas, including those about the story of Babel, may also have French sources (see Céard, 'De Babel à la Pentecôte' and on the wide dissemination of new theories of the vernacular generally, Waswo, *Language and Meaning in the Renaissance*, ch. 4).

chaplain, soon to begin book-collecting visits to the libraries of the monasteries of England for Henry.⁹² Leland appears to have known the Treasurer of the Chamber well. John Stow, the sixteenth-century Chaucer editor and antiquary, copied some of Leland's poems in praise of Tuke and one entitled 'Polydor Virgil ad brienam Tuccam' (fol. 37r) into his notebook, now Bodl. Tanner 464d.⁹³ The antiquary John Bale, who also copied a great deal of material from Leland's unpublished papers, left an account in one of his notebooks of 'Brianus Tuke, eques auratus, vir Latine eruditus' [Brian Tuke, treasurer, a man learned in Latin] who 'Chronicon Latinum ... aduersus Polydorum Vergilium edidit [put forth a Latin chronicle ... against Polydore Vergil].'⁹⁴ Behind the 'publyck' works of Chaucer was this—a Latinate culture of private manuscript publication and circulation among the sort of learned gentleman who tarried for tides at palaces and tended, or hoped to tend, the Tudor king.

A number of matters were of great concern to courtly gentlemen in the early 1530s when the preface to the *Workes* was composed. Henry and the pope were at loggerheads—but perhaps more pressingly for this group of men of an antiquarian bent, Polydore Vergil's *Anglica Historia* was in circulation, spreading ideas that would 'clerely abolyssh the laude / renoume / and glorie' of England, particularly by refutation of the Arthurian legend and equivocation over various foundational myths.⁹⁵ The best known of the many texts written against Vergil is a long poem on Arthur by Leland himself.⁹⁶ A denunciation of Vergil seems to be buried in the preface to the 1532 Chaucer edition. Those that 'wolde blemyshe' the story of the nation include 'straungers vnder pretexte of highe lernyng' (A3r). The medieval author is not merely a worthy principle for the selection of old and scattered textual material, but a way to 'preuayle' over such strangers, a force to be marshalled in the scholarly defence of the realm.

⁹² Of Chaucer's *Workes*, Leland writes, 'Brianus Tucca ... edita in postreman impressionem praeactione elimata, luculenta, eleganti [Brian Tuke ... published in the last edition an elevated, excellent, and polished preface]' (Bodl. Top. Gen. C. 4, fol. 160r; cited from Hammond, *Chaucer*, 4).

⁹³ Poems to Tuke appear on fols. 11r, 25r–v, 29r, 32v.

⁹⁴ Bale, *Index Britanniae Scriptorum*, 50. On Leland's career and the circulation of his papers in and after his lifetime, see Carley, 'Leland, John (c.1503–1552)'.

⁹⁵ See Hay (ed.), *The Anglica Historia of Polydore Vergil A.D. 1485–1537*, esp. 79–85, on editions and the circulation of manuscripts from about 1527. On the text and its influence, see Gransden, *Historical Writing in England*, ii, 425–43.

⁹⁶ Carley, 'Polydore Vergil and John Leland on King Arthur'.

There is an extent to which, however, this meaning for Chaucer's book is an opaque one. I think it likely that it is Vergil to whom Tuke and Thynne so vociferously object here. It is striking, for instance, that Tuke's description of the origin of languages makes no detectable use of the story as told by Vergil in his popular *De inventoribus rerum*.⁹⁷ But if this is one meaning of their preface, it is one that is private to a long-since vanished coterie of Henrician writers and readers. A degree of exclusivity may have been the intention of the book's producers. The 1532 *Workes* is not a book designed to enthrall or entrap all 'men' as Criseyde or the half-clothed Venus do. It is a book for 'vs Englishshe men', for high-minded and like-minded readers. Only those who could afford really big books could buy this one. From 1532 until the nineteenth century, poems ascribed to Chaucer would be accessible almost exclusively (at least as new books) in similarly large editions of 'Works'. The medieval author had been retrieved from the darkness only to be placed too high on the shop shelf for the less wealthy purchaser of books.⁹⁸

Those who sought to make an edifice of Chaucer's canon in 1532 aspired to a stable, national story that accommodated the medieval author. But their large book, as much as the 'littel' ones that came before it, ran certain risks as it took its place in an English realm that was often riven by unreason, or at least disharmony. The 1532 Chaucer edition is not less profane because it claims to be 'angelic'. It must still contain the voices and debates of the pilgrims, the interjections of both goose and turtle dove, Troilus and Criseyde. Multiple voices jostle for space within the covers of the *Workes*, as they do within any history of Chaucer's texts. And while Tuke's note seems to close in on one context or meaning for the book, consumption was not restricted to those who tended quite so single-mindedly to matters of king and country. A copy of the Thynne edition, for instance, served as reading matter for a group of noble men and women who extracted, revoiced, and rescripted its forms in the so-called Devonshire manuscript, BL Add. 17492. One of the scribes of this manuscript altered a line from Thynne's version of the apocryphal 'Remedy of Love' upon '[t]he cursydnesse yet and disceyte of

⁹⁷ On the popularity of early editions of *De inventoribus*, the expanded version of which was printed in 1521, see Connell, 'Vergil, Polydore (c.1470–1555)'. For the text and translation, see Vergil, *On Discovery*, i, ch. 3.

⁹⁸ A bound copy of *The Workes* available for sale in Cambridge in the 1540s was 5s. 8d. (Bennett, 'Notes of English Retail Book-Prices, 1480–1560', 176). For similar patterns in the publication of other canonical writers, see St Clair, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period*.

women' (351v). In the new version of the lyric, the politics of medieval antifeminism are incorporated within a Tudor debate about women like Criseyde and lovers like Troilus—a truly perilous debate for the sort of courtly women whose hands are found here: Mary Shelton, cousin of Anne Boleyn who was executed for her 'disceyte', her fellow scribes Lady Margaret Douglas, niece of Henry VIII, and Mary (Howard) Fitzroy, sister of the earl of Surrey, the former imprisoned for her relationship with Thomas Howard, the latter under suspicion for abetting the lovers. The relevant stanza, which may in fact be in Thomas Howard's hand, reads:⁹⁹

yff all the erthe were parchment scrybable
spedy for the hande / and all maner wode
were hewed and proporcyoned to penne's able
al water ynke / in damme or in flode
euery man beyng a parfyte scribe & good
the faythfulnes yet and prayse of women
cowde not be shewyd by the meane off penne.

(fol. 90r, emphasis added)¹⁰⁰

This copyist's pen points at the way that an editorial sleight of hand has slipped a copy of 'The Remedy of Love' (probably selected from an anonymous but broadly Chaucerian manuscript) into a printed book and into a misogynist definition of Chaucer's canon. It reminds us that the process of book production—parchment, ink, pen, hand, press—may impose upon and define the medieval author's work but it will fail to do so in any final sense. The 'parfyte scribe', the most assiduous editor, even the king, could not control the way that these Tudor readers read their Chaucer.

⁹⁹ See Baron, 'Mary (Howard) Fitzroy's Hand in the Devonshire Manuscript'; Heale, 'Women and the Courtly Love Lyric'. Following earlier published work on this book, and rather carelessly, I incorrectly identify the copyist of the lyric as Mary Shelton in 'Introduction: Bibliography and Early Tudor Texts'; Baron suggests Thomas Howard as the scribe at this point in the book, though as she and Heale note, the evidence for this is inconclusive.

¹⁰⁰ Cited from Heale, 'Women and the Courtly Lyric', 307.

4

Court and Cloister: Editions of Lydgate, 1509 to 1534

Lydgate is—even at his most pious, or when acting on behalf of his monastic brethren—an astute commentator upon political matters.¹ His 1433 *Life of SS Edmund and Fremund*, commissioned by Abbot Curteys on the occasion of the visit of the child king Henry VI to the monastery of Bury St Edmunds, describes not only the king-saint but all the body politic:

al the residue, in oon ymage knet,
Wer by kyng Edmund in ther dew ordre set:
Of this ymage prynces stood as hed,
With ther two eyen, of prudence and resoun,
To ther sogetis forto takyn heed,

.
Eek that the eers haue inclynacioun
That outhur party his quarell may expresse.²

The picture that this ‘ymage’—this mirror for any English prince—reflects is one of strong kingship, a wilful head who sets, sees, and hears all. A strong leader is vital to good governance; only a prince who is all ‘oon’ with himself can mediate the inevitably contradictory claims—the quarrels and diverse inclinations—of his people. Edmund

disdeyned of kyngly excellence
To alle fals tonges to yeuen audience;
.

¹ For useful discussion along these lines, see the recent studies of Nolan, *John Lydgate and the Making of Public Culture*, and Mortimer, *John Lydgate's Fall of Princes*, which were forthcoming when this study was completed.

² There is no scholarly edition of this text; quotations here are from Hervey (ed.), *Corolla Sancti Edmundi*, 441.

Feyned lesynges and adulacioun,
Kankrid mouthes and lippis detestable.

(444)

It was conventional for political writers from John of Salisbury onwards to describe the knightly class as the nation's arms; its labourers as legs on which to stand firm; the church as its soul.³ But Lydgate's poem develops and extends the tradition. Princely perfection is needed to sustain this body—like that of a martyred saint—in an incorrupt state. The king-saint Edmund does not, in Lydgate's poem, choose martyrdom for Christ. He chooses it as an exercise of will, in disdain of advice from a stuttering bishop ('Such mortal dreed gan al his look difface|That he vnnethe had no woord to speke') who eventually spits out some bad counsel. He advises the king to pretend to surrender in the face of some ravaging Danes:

But blissid Edmond was not born to feyne—
Yt longid not onto his roial blood;
His herte euer on, departed not on tweyne,
Hatid too hedis closid in oon hood;
So stable and hool withynne his soule he stood
By manly force, of o face and of o cheer.

(465–6)

Edmund, unlike the bishop, keeps his head and then keeps it again even after he is decapitated: it is guarded by a wolf; able to call to the East Anglian people who seek it; and finally made, miraculously, all 'o' again with his body.⁴ There is just one meaning for Edmund's *vita* in Lydgate's formulation of it. The martyr who failed to defend his people from the Danes—who left them 'without an hed, dispers and eek deuyded'—is redeemed as a 'stable and hool' king whose saintly head was never really at risk from the canker of false flattery or from any unstable political advice.

I start this chapter with the *Life of SS Edmund and Fremund*, a text that was not printed in the early modern period—although Stephen Hawes describes it as Lydgate's in his bibliography for the poet in the 1509

³ Nederman and Forhan (eds.), *Medieval Political Theory, A Reader*; on the concept of the body politic as a framework for the reign of Henry VI, see Watts, *Henry VI and the Politics of Kingship*, ch. 2.

⁴ See Whitelock, 'Fact and Fiction in the Legend of St Edmund', on the *vita*.

edition of *The Pastime of Pleasure*—in order to introduce the concerns of this chapter.⁵ In what follows, I deal with manuscripts as well as printed editions and with religious as well as political texts. I describe books valued for their exemplary content and as the work of a clerkly author; I also describe books valued as mirrors for temporal patrons and secular princes. The men and women who wielded political power at the end of the Middle Ages were a source of authority for vernacular writing, and a source of political and pecuniary reward for those involved in textual production of all kinds. Chaucer made the printed books described in the last chapter appear ‘stable and hool’. The integrity of the books described in this chapter is conceived in different ways. It depends upon the author at times but at others upon the courtiers who commissioned editions and scribal copies of printed books; upon the king’s favour and privilege; and upon the complex relationship between crown and church.

The early Tudor period has been described as one that witnessed a Tudor ‘revolution’ of government, characterized by the centralization of bureaucracy and revenue—the power of the king and the waning power of the nobility—and a new and effective campaign of state propaganda. The press, it is argued, was deployed for both purposes. It was made a new part of the English body politic and in the process the production of books was made subject, like those in the newly created office of royal printer, to Henry VIII and his counsellors’ sovereign will.⁶ More recently, historians like G. W. Bernard, John Watts, and S. J. Gunn have advocated a more cautious approach: a ‘wave of empirical discoveries’ has replaced the idea of radical change and centralization with evidence of more diffuse and persistently traditional methods of governance.⁷ And attention to the conceptual framework and the textual culture of Tudor politics has also revealed precisely the cracks in the mirror of good kingship that Lydgate admits into his life of St Edmund. Tudor advisory texts, including those penned by medieval authors, may be discovered at the tip of ‘kanrid’ as well as well-meaning tongues, may evade control, risk doubleness, fail their monarch—or worse, reflect an accurately fractured ‘ymage’ of his power. The printed books described

⁵ In his *Pastime of Pleasure*, l. 1344, composed 1503/4; see the discussion in Ch. 3.

⁶ See Elton, *Policy and Police*, esp. 171–216; and for a more nuanced argument, Neville-Sington, ‘Press, Politics and Religion’.

⁷ The ‘wave’ is described by Watts, ‘Conclusion’, 264–5, in a volume of essays that exemplify the approach, *The End of the Middle Ages?* See also Bernard and Gunn (eds.), *Authority and Consent in Tudor England*, and Bernard (ed.), *The Tudor Nobility* (especially Bernard’s ‘Introduction’).

in this chapter are evidence of the ‘manly force’ of the Tudor king, but they also belong to a larger and less sturdy Tudor body politic, to its religious as well as secular institutions, and to its dispersed, divided, and by 1534, where this chapter ends, sometimes irreconcilable concerns.

LYDGATE, PROVERBS, AND THE TUDOR COURT

Around the first year of the reign of Henry VIII, Wynkyn de Worde issued a quarto edition entitled *The prouerbes of Lydgate* (1510?). The edition is in fact a collection of extracts and minor poems: eight of Lydgate’s interpolations into his translation of *The Fall of Princes*; the first two separated from the remaining group by the addition of versions of Chaucer’s ‘Fortune’ and ‘Truth’; and two minor poems from the Lydgate canon, ‘Consulo Quisquis Eris’—this version later reprinted, along with ‘Truth’, in Pynson’s 1526? *House of Fame*—and ‘Look in thy Merour’.⁸

There is much that is familiar about this quarto pamphlet. Its closest surviving manuscript analogue is BL Harley 2251, a book that was copied by the Hammond-scribe, who, as I argued in Chapter 1, was involved in the perhaps speculative production of vernacular texts in late fifteenth-century London, often in booklet form for dissemination in miscellanies.⁹ However, by c.1510 the bibliographical culture that had sustained the Hammond-scribe’s work had changed. Tentatively speculative production had been supplanted by the operations of profiteering printers. New systems for the organization and the promotion of textual material had been developed as aspects of mechanized production. On the title-page and in the colophon to the 1510? *Prouerbes*, Lydgate is named, as his master, Chaucer is on De Worde’s 1498 edition of *The Canterbury Tales* and on the small quarto pamphlet De Worde made of *Troilus and Criseyde* in 1517. Printing had prompted a new paratextual

⁸ STC 17026; the book was reprinted 1520? STC 17027: the *Fall* extracts are ix. 3605–28; i. 967–1001; i. 4530–57; ix. 2371–433; vi. 2948–54, 3151–7, 3214–76; v. 2509–36 (IMEV 1168); Chaucer’s minor poems are IMEV 3661 and 809; Lydgate’s are IMEV 1294 and 3798. For more detail see Gillespie, “‘These proverbes yet do last’”.

⁹ Fols. 81r–3v of this book have some of the same extracts from *The Fall* (second and third) and it contains ‘Consulo’ and ‘Fortune’. Another close analogue is BL Harley 2255, which contains ‘Consulo’, ‘Look in thy Merour’, and four of De Worde’s extracts together, fols. 94v–95v. See also Edwards, ‘John Lydgate, Medieval Antifeminism, and Harley 2251’.

enunciation of the book, and paratext was sometimes arranged around ideas about the medieval author.

The author's place in the 1510? *Prouerbes* is both visual and verbal. The edition has two woodcut images. On the title-page, factotum figures are arranged in a composite image, as if in conversation (see Fig. 20).¹⁰ On the verso of the title-page is a scholar woodcut, in which an author or reader is at work on the book before him (see Fig. 21).¹¹ The second image was used elsewhere by De Worde for the title-pages of devotional tracts, but in this book the heading 'prouerbes' steers the customer or reader away from strictly religious concerns. The link between proverbial traditions and authors was long standing in vernacular as well as Latinate cultures:

Vor hit is soþ—Alfred hit seide
& me hit mai ine boke rede,

declares the owl in *The Owl and the Nightingale* as he cites some of many proverbs.¹² What is at stake is a problem so old it is itself almost proverbial. How can 'soþ' be told from all that is 'seide'? Which of the utterances that wise men exchange are worth repeating? Which lines from the leaves of the books that fill a scholar's study are worth saving? An author verifies and acts as a sort of pointing hand for proverbs. One may read them 'ine boke', in volumes that ascribe and arrange sayings under the name of a wise old soothsayer, as in the *Disticha Catonis*;¹³ one can find the truth on any given matter by scanning the margins of medieval *florilegia* for authors' names.¹⁴

Lydgate, named as author in De Worde's edition, is a part of these long-standing textual traditions. He may be part of something new as well. In the Tudor period, the educators and advisers to Christian humanist princes—men described by Erasmus, Castiglione, More, and Elyot—were meant to develop the political potential of proverbs. *Sententia* formed the basis for their erudition, and were to be deployed

¹⁰ On the use and reuse of factotum figures in early printed books and commercial and practical motives for it, see Driver, *The Image in Print*, ch. 2.

¹¹ Hodnett, *English Woodcuts, 1480–1535*, no. 925. See Gillespie, '“These proverbes yet do last”', for its use elsewhere and a reproduction, fig. 4.

¹² Cited from Cartlidge (ed.), *The Owl and the Nightingale*, ll. 349–50.

¹³ See Woods and Copeland, 'Classroom and Confession', 380–1, on the medieval use of Cato's sayings.

¹⁴ On proverbs and other texts in *florilegia*, see Moss, *Printed commonplace-Books and the Structuring of Renaissance Thought*, 1–32.



Figure 20. Cambridge, England, Cambridge University Library, Sel. 5. 16: *Prouerbes of Lydgate* (printed by Wynkyn de Worde, 1510?), STC 17026, A1r. Reproduced by permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library.



Figure 21. Cambridge, England, Cambridge University Library, Sel. 5. 16: *Prouerbes of Lydgate* (printed by Wynkyn de Worde, 1510?), STC 17026, A1v. Reproduced by permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library.

for the good counsel of their rulers.¹⁵ Proverbs had a real place in Tudor intellectual and courtly culture, as Erasmus suggests in his *Education of a Christian Prince*:

It is not enough just to hand out precepts to restrain the prince from vices or to incite him to a better course—they must be impressed, crammed in, inculcated, and in one way and another kept before him, now by a suggestive thought, now by a fable, now by analogy, now by example, now by maxims, now by a proverb. They should be engraved on rings, painted in pictures, appended to the wreaths of honor ... and kept always before him.¹⁶

The differences between Erasmian and earlier theories of royal counsel have been described by more qualified scholars elsewhere.¹⁷ I am here interested in the way that, in the texts found in the 1510? *Prouerbes*, Lydgate's writing anticipates the private compact between sovereign and counsellor described by Erasmus. The extracts from his *Fall of Princes* describe princely munificence, liberality, patience, and adherence to good counsel as they warn rulers about *fortuna*. The short lyric 'Look in Thy Merour' describes the proper role of literary mirrors for princes: the promotion of 'polityk governaunce'.¹⁸ 'Consulo Quisquis Eris' begins with the same message it first offers in Pynson's 1526 *House of Fame*, described in the last chapter: 'Lyke the audience so vttir thy language'.¹⁹ The verbal anarchy that results from this directive was associated in Chapter 3 with poems of courtly love. In the 1510? *Prouerbes* it is linked to anxiety about the definition of the prince's court itself, its boundaries disrupted by the verbal, rather than real, 'felaship' (l. 29) between a king and his flattering courtiers, its hierarchies overturned by the difficulty of maintaining a consistent rhetoric of authority. When Lydgate writes a solution to the problem—'wher vertu regnyth, ther vttir thy language'—he adds some exemplary detail. The 'reign' is that of a king, Alexander, whose sudden fall is ascribed to ill-advised belligerence. Alexander should, Lydgate suggests, have sought the counsel of the clerkly philosopher Diogenes who thought that 'vertu was moor imperrial' than militaristic self-aggrandizement ('Consulo Quisquis Eris', l. 87). 'Vertu',

¹⁵ See Moss, *Printed commonplace Books*, 56–119, and Crane, *Framing Authority*, 93–115. On medieval political uses of such anthologies, see Firth Green, *Poets and Princepleasers*, 135–49.

¹⁶ *The Education of a Christian Prince*, 144–5.

¹⁷ For instance, Fox and Guy, *Reassessing the Henrician Age*, 34–51, and Hankins, 'Humanism and the Origins of Modern Political Thought'.

¹⁸ *Minor Poems of Lydgate: Part II*, 'Look in Thy Merour', l. 202.

¹⁹ *Minor Poems of Lydgate: Part II*, 'Consulo Quisquis Eris', l. 8.

then, is partly to be achieved through the giving and following of good advice, through the replication of texts that direct the king properly and in doing so guarantee stable, peaceful, and traditional monarchical rule.²⁰

Among members of the Tudor court, however, counsel—by proverb or by flattery—and the literary representation of its efficacy were not matters so easily resolved. Sir Thomas Wyatt deemed proverbial utterances worthy of his satirical attention in a poem addressed to, and apparently aimed satirically at, Sir Francis Bryan, a Gentleman of the Privy Chamber, and, like Wyatt, an ambassador and envoy for Henry VIII—a man who earned the enmity of Thomas Cromwell and other Tudor courtiers each time he earned the favour of his king. He did so, according to contemporary commentators, by a style of direct speaking and by a wanton lifestyle that at times attracted the monarch—by acting as Henry's 'vicar of hell'.²¹ In his satire, Wyatt collapses the distinction between Bryan's words and his deeds. As Seth Lerer has argued, he likens the licentious courtier to Chaucer's Pandarus in the process. Bryan, like Pandarus, appropriates proverbs 'to make [his] langage swete' either 'in word alone' or, worse, in much the same way that he wantonly appropriates his female relations:

Thy nece, thy cosyn, thy sister or thy doghter,
If she be faire, if handsom be her myddell,
Yf thy better hath her love besoght her,
Avance his cause and he shall help thy need.²²

This need, it turns out, is to 'chaunge that for gold' (l. 82). In Wyatt's satire, proverbs are attacked as a method of courtly self-advancement by way of conventional anxiety about female promiscuity and the status of utterances, both exchangeable goods in an imagined courtly economy. Wyatt's poem is therefore at its most ironic and condemnatory when he cites a text that appears in the 1510? *Prouerbes*, Chaucer's 'Truth': 'Flee fro the prees and dwelle with sothfastnesse' (l. 1). In Wyatt's poem this Chaucerian proverb, which De Worde includes, ascribed to the elder poet, alongside the sayings 'of Lydgate', is redeployed in the Tudor

²⁰ See Perkins, 'Representing Advice in Lydgate'.

²¹ Starkey, 'The Court', and Brigden, "'The Shadow that You Know'" and 'Bryan, Sir Francis (d. 1550)' (the tradition of Bryan as Henry's 'vicar of hell' is described in the latter).

²² *Collected Poems of Sir Thomas Wyatt*, cvii, ll. 36, 68–71; Lerer, *Courtly Letters in the Age of Henry VIII*, 166–77. See Wood, *The Elements of Chaucer's Troilus*, 143–53, on Pandarus's use of proverbs in *Troilus*.

‘prees’. The proverb is implicated in the system it critiques, pressed into the service of courtiers (Bryan, or Wyatt himself), and so pressed into an ironic new formulation: ‘Fle therefore trueth’ writes Wyatt (l. 34). Words alone, not good deeds, will advance the speaker or writer who dwells at court.

I would develop some of Lerer’s points here, and suggest that it is not only Bryan, but proverbs themselves, that are problematic in Wyatt’s account of the Tudor court. They are too pliable to serve the worthy causes of which they speak, too readily used by unworthy speakers. The reader is taught, in terms borrowed from medieval authors, to mistrust sententious offerings, including—perhaps especially—a specific poem entitled ‘The proverbes of Salmon do playnly declare’ containing two of the *sententia* cited by Wyatt, and ending ‘quod Bryan’, that survives in the manuscript Huntington 183 in a scribal hand of the Tudor period. The circulation of this book was presumably restricted by its bibliographical form to a coterie and perhaps courtly audience. But the book does not provide a space ‘wher vertu regnyth’, at least not to a reader of Wyatt’s poem. The name Bryan has tended to locate the poem (in just a few discussions) in a Tudor ‘press’—amid all the other self-advancing utterances of the inhabitants of a thronging court.²³

While Tudor printers like De Worde multiplied the multiple surfaces needed, according to Erasmus, to impress properly a good idea upon a prince, while they created new places for worthy proverbial discourse and promoted books like the 1510? *Prouerbes of Lydgate* accordingly, they also magnified the problems with proverbial discourse that are identified in Wyatt’s satire. The products of the sixteenth-century English printing press, much like those of the courtly ‘press’, were produced for profit: De Worde intended that the sententious poems he printed would be sold to all sorts of readers—changed for gold (or at least loose change)—and so they were. A copy of the next 1520? edition of the *Prouerbes* was bound in the early 1550s alongside other pamphlets associated with *Lydgate* and a selection of reformist political and religious tracts.²⁴ Another

²³ Kinsman, ‘The Proverbes of Salmon Do Playnly Declare’.

²⁴ The books are Huntington 61094–1102: *The maydens crosse rewe*, 1540?, *STC* 17192; *Lydgate’s Churl and the Bird*, printed by Mychell, 1534? (see below for further discussion); “The parlyament of byrdes” (8 stubs only, perhaps the edition of De Worde, c.1520, *STC* 19303.7); *Prouerbes of Lydgate*; *Lydgate, The Testament*, printed by Pynson, 1520? (see below for further discussion); Morison’s *Remedy for sedition*, 1536, *STC* 18113.7 (incorrectly identified as the 1536 edition *STC* 18113.5 in Gillespie, ‘Poets, Printers, and Early English *Sammelbände*’, where the date of the binding is

was bound, perhaps in the Tudor period, immediately before Pynson's 1529? edition of *The sayinges or prouerbes of king Salomon*.²⁵ In the latter text, Solomon, wisest of kings, possessed of great sacral as well as royal authority, makes his wisdom available for public good in the form of proverbs, the sort of wise, biblically derived sayings that someone like Bryan might gather up to advise his king, and secure his own reputation. The king in *The sayinges or prouerbes of king Salomon* has his own adviser, but he is more like the 'vicar of hell' than the sententious Bryan of the Huntington manuscript. Marcolphus, the wise fool of the medieval Solomonic tradition, is here also a lascivious fool.²⁶ He reformulates each saying as pertinent to 'whores': 'A horse that his brydell hath on|He is rede anon' declares a proverb of Solomon. 'A hoore clothed gayly|Is soone made rede' responds Marcolphus (A3r). This is the effect of courtly advice as it is envisaged in Wyatt's poem. That which is meant to advance public good is in fact corrupt, comparable to a debased trade in female flesh.

LYDGATE AND THE FIFTH EARL OF NORTHUMBERLAND

No proverbial utterance—wise or foolish, imperial or trivial, spoken, copied, or printed—is exempt from Marcolphus's bawdy assault on aphoristic traditions or from the ironies of Wyatt's satire. However, one of the purposes of this discussion is to link the unstable aspect of proverbial and advisory discourse to the work of the press in particular. I mean to make a point that I have made throughout this study: the press did not create, but it may have, or may have been *seen* to, intensify the problem of textual instability, the availability of texts for a wider range of readers, for profit, gold, or self-advancement rather than for 'vertu'. The point is perhaps made best not in any printed copy of De

discussed); *Pierce the Ploughmans crede*, 1553, STC 19904; *The plesaunte playne and pythye pathewaye*, 1552?, STC 15113.5; *Certayne statutes and ordenaunces of warre*, 1513, STC 9333; *The forme and maner of makying and consecratyng of archebishops... and deacons*, 1549, STC 16462.5.

²⁵ STC 22899, printed for R. Wyer, now Huntington 31857. The copy of *Prouerbes* is PML W 16 A. For a working list of other items in this book, long since disbound, see Gillespie, 'Poets, Printers, and Early English *Sammelbände*', 194, n. 15.

²⁶ See Beecher (ed.), *The Dialogue of Solomon and Marcolphus*, esp. 93–6, where he identifies the French printed source for Pynson's text.

Worde's *Prouerbes of Lydgate*, but in a single, surviving manuscript copy of that edition, Bodl. Arch. Seld. B. 10, a fifteenth-century copy of John Hardyng's *Chronicle*, was augmented in the sixteenth century by the addition of the heraldic insignia of the fifth earl of Northumberland, Henry Percy (*d.* 1526) and by the addition, by a scribe skilled in French *lettre bastarde*, of a copy of a lost De Worde edition of *The prouerbes*. The book is evidence of the willingness of someone, the earl himself or a member of one of his households or his large retinue, to incur the cost of producing a manuscript version of printed material for a noble milieu. There is no clear evidence that the original printed book was stigmatized, but the scribal copy was at least privileged. In it the text is carefully constructed as a place 'wher vertu', as described by Lydgate in 'Consulo Quisquis Eris', may reign—away from the Tudor press and away from a trade in printed proverbial utterances.²⁷

The date of the additions to Bodl. Arch. Seld. B. 10 may be precisely established by comparison with another book worked on by the same artisans in the early sixteenth century. BL Royal 18 D II is a copy of Lydgate's *Troy Book* (with *The Siege of Thebes*) that was described in some detail in Chapter 1. It passed from its first aristocratic owner, the earl of Pembroke, to the Percy family by marriage late in the fifteenth century.²⁸ Between about 1516 and 1527,²⁹ a group of texts from manuscript and printed sources were added to it: Lydgate's *Testament* (copied from Pynson's edition of 1520?);³⁰ Skelton's *Upon the Dolorus Death* (of the fourth earl of Northumberland);³¹ *The Assembly of Gods* (copied from De Worde's c.1494 edition);³² William Cornish's *Treatise*

²⁷ See Parkes, *English Cursive Book Hands, 1250–1500*, 15, pl. 15, on the scribe. My collation of the text, and the appearance of an excrescent 'puer' on fol. 4r of the additional manuscript taken from a running footer in the print suggests that the scribe's source is neither the 1510? nor 1520? edition, but an edition extremely close to these in terms of text and format.

²⁸ On the Herbert–Northumberland connection, see Pugh, 'Henry VII and the English Nobility', 50.

²⁹ Terminus *post-quem* is provided by historical references in the Peeris chronicle, see the description (listing contents) in Gilson and Warner, *Catalogue of the Western Manuscripts in the Old Royal and King's Collections*; *ante-quem* by the death of the earl. For biographical details, see Hoyle, 'Henry Algernon, fifth earl of Northumberland (1478–1527)'.

³⁰ The manuscript and the 1520? edition, STC 17035, containing this text, IMEV 2464 (for further discussion see below), almost invariably agree where they differ from other witnesses (*The Minor Poems of Lydgate: Part I*, 338–62).

³¹ Scattergood, *Reading the Past*, 276.

³² STC 17007; see Fletcher, 'The Textual Tradition of *The Assembly of the Gods*'; the edition is discussed in Ch. 2.

between Truth and Information; a redaction of Lydgate's *Verses on the Kings of England*; ³³ 'The armes of certayne kyngis cristanyde'; William Peiris's *Chronicle of the Percy Family*; and some proverbs from the earl's seats at Leconfield and Wressle Castles, Yorkshire, some on the counsel of Aristotle to Alexander. ³⁴

The augmentation of both these books represents considerable financial outlay: parchment was used instead of paper and it is of a fine quality. ³⁵ Professional scribes and decorators worked on the book, either on commission or as members of one of Northumberland's households. ³⁶ In either case, the treatment of the texts conforms to what is known about the importance of his northern seats to the earl during the last decades of his life. The traditional history of the family has it that Northumberland fled the Tudor court after 1516, a victim of the massive appropriation of the power and revenue of their 'overmighty' subjects by Henry VII and VIII. ³⁷ More recent work on the fifth and sixth earls of Northumberland has modified this story of Tudor centralization. 'Most historians would now agree that the relationship between magnate and early Tudor monarch was one which operated to their mutual and reciprocal benefit'. ³⁸ But historians also broadly agree that Northumberland's houses at Leconfield and Wressle were important in his later years, a refuge after a series of mishaps at court in earlier decades—the damages awarded for the ravishment of a young female ward in 1505, for instance, and the fifth earl's imprisonment in 1516 in particular. They were a place where the magnate's displays of power and magnificence in his own stronghold of the north might compensate for his lack of, or disinterest in, any but ceremonial royal offices. The augmentation of these two manuscripts appears to be a minor aspect of a programme of lavish household expenditure that magnified the Percy family and circle. It did so, notably, in the traditional terms of 'polityk

³³ Mooney, 'Lydgate's "Kings of England" and Another Verse Chronicle of the Kings', 273–4.

³⁴ Edwards, 'Middle English Inscriptional Verse Texts', 29–30.

³⁵ On the relatively high cost of parchment/vellum, see Kwakkel, 'A New Type of Book for a New Type of Reader', and my comments on book prices in Ch. 2.

³⁶ See Hoyle, 'Henry Algernon, fifth earl of Northumberland (1478–1527)', on artisans of various sorts (including a maker of interludes) described in surviving household books.

³⁷ See James, *A Tudor Magnate and the Tudor State*.

³⁸ Hoyle's words in 'Henry Percy, Sixth Earl of Northumberland, and the Fall of the House of Percy, 1527–1537', 180. See also Bernard, *Power and Politics in Tudor England*, 20–49.

gouvernaunce' as it is described in Lydgate's 'Look in Thy Merour'. The texts added to these books describe Northumberland's worth, and that of his men, as the worth of loyal subjects to a benevolent prince. John Hardyng's *Chronicle*—written by a soldier-poet who served with Hotspur, the greatest of the Percy clan—validates the chivalric and imperialist English noble culture of his moment and describes the role of the Percy family in sustaining both.³⁹ Lydgate's *Troy Book* and *Siege of Thebes* validate the same culture (albeit in sometimes ambiguous or pessimistic terms), and in BL Royal 18 D II Skelton's poem brings it all home as he describes the apposite grief of the 'menyall men of [the fourth earl's] household, | Whom he as lorde worsheply manteynd'.⁴⁰ William Peiris, who was one of the fifth earl's secretaries, within his household, contributes a chronicle that mirrors, in form and function, the version of Lydgate's *Kings of England*, implicitly positing a connection between noble and English sovereign identity.⁴¹ Skelton does the same, more explicitly: the fourth earl was 'of the blode royall descendege nobelly' (l. 4). All these texts map the Percys' loyal vassalage and its importance to the English crown's 'imperial' success.

However, the Lydgate manuscripts linked to Northumberland's household do not oversimplify the complex matter of Tudor fealty and the plight of those who serve the king. Cornish's *Treatise* rails against

suche enformers who thei be
that makith their malise mater of the poure
And cruelly withoute conscience right or pity
Disgorgith ther venome.⁴²

The *Treatise* was probably written while Cornish, a Gentleman of the King's Chapel until 1523, was in the Fleet in 1504, a year when he may also have penned some lost, satirical verses against Richard Empson, Henry VII's much-hated revenue collector (Empson was bonded to keep the peace with Cornish in that year).⁴³ According to John Stow, who provides the original source for this story, the latter poem was composed at the request of the earl of Kent, another nobleman said to have been

³⁹ See Gransden, *Historical Writing in England*, ii, 274–87, and on further Tudor uses for the text, Hiatt, 'Stow, Grafton, and Fifteenth-Century Historiography'.

⁴⁰ *John Skelton: The Complete English Poems*, ll. 185–6. On Skelton and the Percys, see Walker, *John Skelton and the Politics of the 1520s*, 23.

⁴¹ See Summerson, 'Peiris, William (fl. c.1520)'.

⁴² Edited by Flügel, 'Kleinere Mitteilungen aus Handschriften', ll. 23–5.

⁴³ See Bowers, 'Cornyshe, William (d.1523)', and Condon, 'Empson, Sir Richard (c.1450–1510)'.

victimized by the Tudor kings, but, as G. W. Bernard argues, most likely responsible for his own fall through the inept administration of various properties.⁴⁴ The careers of noblemen like Kent and Northumberland may not be, as they have sometimes been described, evidence of a newly powerful monarchy determined to curb the might of the English nobility, but they are evidence of something commonplace—even proverbial. In the late medieval court, the best laid schemes for self-advancement may go awry. In perhaps his most famous appearance in Tudor literary history, Cavendish's *Life and Death of Wolsey*, Northumberland is depicted hectoring a son who incurred the wrath of Wolsey and 'purchased' 'the kynges displeasure intollerable for any subiecte to susteyn' by falling for Anne Boleyn.⁴⁵ It is likely that Northumberland had placed his son in the powerful cardinal's household to advance his family's cause. It seems that the earl-to-be might just as well have stayed at home.

The two Lydgate manuscripts linked to Northumberland describe what the younger Percy might have learned had he stayed put (and spent a little more time staring at the ceiling). At Leconfield and Wressle, the duty of a 'subiecte' and other moral proverbs were 'kept before him ... engraved ... painted'. The proverbs collected in Royal 18 D II some time after 1516 were originally a material part of the private seat of the magnate, inscribed upon walls, eaves, and 'the rouf of my lorde percy [the younger's water] closet' (BL Royal 18 D II, fol. 202r).⁴⁶ Like Lydgate's sententious texts, the painted proverbs stress the perils of *fortuna*, flattery, covetousness, and urge the reader to 'sequester yⁱ self frome them & y^{en} cast thy syght | Where it may reseyue dyuersly light' (BL Royal 18 D II, fol. 210r). The source of that light is depicted on fol. 200r. An emblem (quite possibly copied from another wall painting) shows a king, Henry VIII, figured within rays like Christ in majesty, but set also within a Tudor rose ('flos rubii coloris' in a Latin poem inscribed upon the image) and holding the sun, 'sol', from which drops fall to a crescent moon, one of the Percy badges (see Fig. 22).⁴⁷ The raining sun is a reminder of the king's God-given authority and his merciful reign. The direct source for the image is Psalm 72: 1–7, David's prayer

⁴⁴ See Stow, *Annales*, STC 23335, 816; Bernard, 'The Fortunes of the Greys, Earls of Kent, in the Early Sixteenth Century'.

⁴⁵ Cavendish, *The Life and Death of Cardinal Wolsey*, 33, ll. 8–9.

⁴⁶ On the trend to link 'architecture and morality' in the education of princes, see Walker, *Persuasive Fictions*, 100–7 (101 for Northumberland).

⁴⁷ See Dickens, 'A Tudor-Percy Emblem in Royal MS. 18 D ii'.

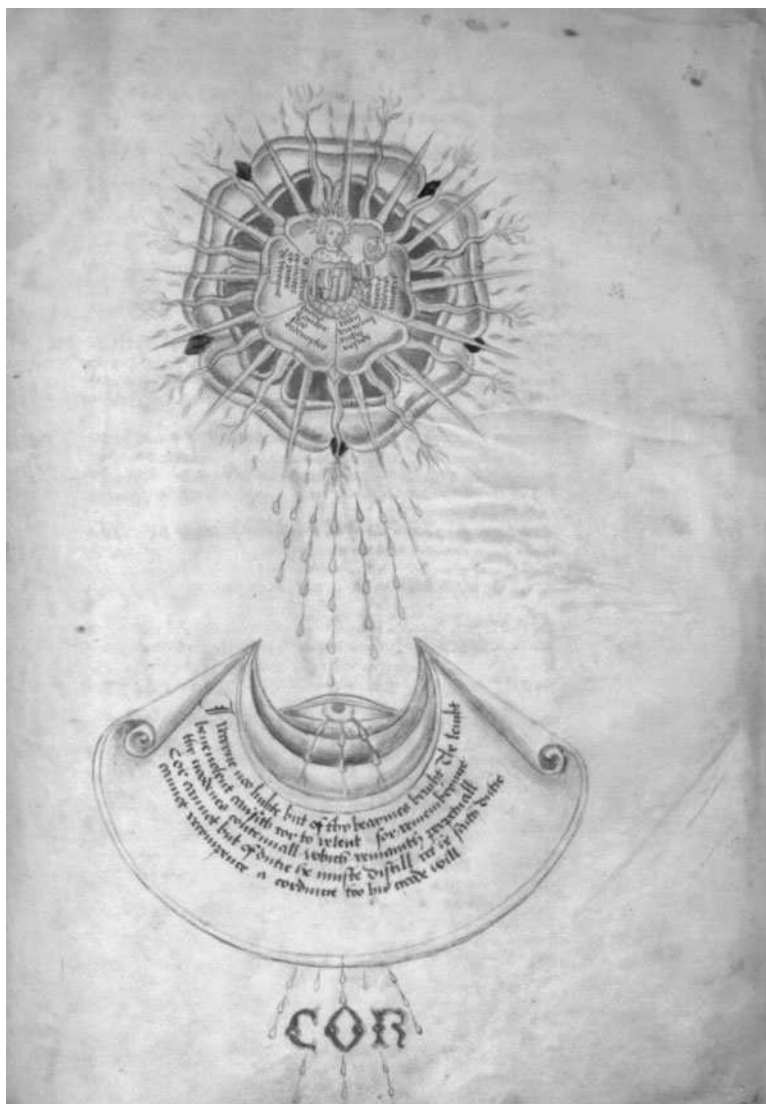


Figure 22. London, British Library, Royal 18 D II, fol. 200r. Reproduced with the permission of the British Library.

for Solomon (a king, like Alexander, mentioned by name in the Percy proverbs), where God is asked to endow the king with justice, that he might endure as long as the sun, the moon, the falling rain. But the raindrops here are also rays or even tears, falling upon/from the Percy eye, the subject (I) of the inscription below: 'I receyue noe lighte but of thy beavmes bright The leight beneuolent causith cor to relent'. Rays from the sun pierce the eye or heart ('cor') of the royal subject, wounding him like a weeping lover into devoted and exclusive service. '[L]eight beneuolent' illuminates the Percy moon which exists only as a reflection and extension of monarchical authority.

The manuscripts Bodl. Arch. Seld. B. 10 and BL Royal 18 D II transform the illustrated pages of De Worde's quarto editions of Lydgate's printed *Prouerbes*. The image of the writer is gone, replaced by heraldic images of aristocratic ownership and emblematic depictions of the relationship between a Tudor monarch and a powerful northern magnate. The idea of proverbial discourse so important to the arrangement and promotion of De Worde's editions of textual extracts is reorientated. Discourse is removed from the 'pres' that may be liable to disrupt and decentre its meanings: from courtly contexts where the sudden fall of the mighty is a routine matter and where flatterers are vicars of hell and venomous informers—but also from print, where the wide availability and the commercial profitability of texts is yet more evidence of their pliable, changeful, unreliable nature. The public printed text is translated into the privacy of a noble household. Lydgate's poem 'Consulo' instructs the reader to find 'wher vertu regnyth' and 'ther vttir thy language'. In these books 'ther' is Northumberland's own court, either at Leconfield or at Wressle. There, books and inscriptions adhere to Erasmian directives on the education of the Christian humanist ruler and to the directive implicit in Wyatt's satire—proverbs should not be disseminated for personal aggrandizement or changed for gold. They must be made, as are the proverbs painted on Northumberland's walls, 'littil and trewly' and only for 'good entente' (BL Royal 18 D II, fol. 204v, 204r).

LYDGATE, PYNSON, AND THE POLITICS OF PRINT

At about the same time that De Worde printed Lydgate's *Prouerbes* on politic governance, Pynson printed the medieval poet's version of

that most popular medieval mirror for princes, Aristotle's *Secreta Secretorum*.⁴⁸ Pynson's 1511 edition of Lydgate's *Secrees* (continued by his fifteenth-century follower Benedict Burgh) is described on the title page as the work of another nobleman and servant to Henry VIII. It is a

boke called the Gouvernaunce of Kynges and prynces: Imprynted at the commaundement of the good and honourable syre Charles Somerset Lorde Herbert: and Chaumberleyne vnto oure Soueraygne lorde kynge Henry the .viii.⁴⁹

Charles Somerset made a prudent marriage into the Herbert family in 1493 and was made Baron Herbert eleven years later. He was one of Henry VII's few creations and the position of Lord Chamberlain that he gained in May 1508 was, unusually, renewed by Henry VIII very soon after his father's death. He was a leader of the expedition to Calais in 1513, for which he was made earl of Worcester. He was a chief organizer of the Field of the Cloth of Gold. His further dealings with Pynson are attested in early sixteenth-century documentation of a land transaction with Richard Grey, earl of Kent, whose less fortunate career was described above.⁵⁰

The 'stigma' of print, or rather, concerns about loose textual dissemination, the preference for counsel given 'littil and trewly' that informs Wyatt's satire and the manuscripts linked to the earl of Northumberland, are not obvious, or present at all, in the books issued by Pynson. No presentation copy of this edition of *Secrees* survives. One might imagine that such a copy was printed on vellum or copied specially by hand—perhaps after the fashion of the *Suasoria Laeticiae* that Pietro Carmeliano presented in manuscript to Henry VII in 1486, BL Add. 33736, or Thomas More's verses for Henry VIII, presented in the form found in BL Cotton Titus D IV in 1509. In both cases the heraldic insignia is close to that seen on the title page to Somerset's *Secrees* (see Fig. 23): the royal arms and crown, supported by angels; the Tudor rose, to which Pynson has added an image of three castles, presumably one of Somerset's own badges (he was 'Constable of the Three Castles' from 1509 onwards). In a presentation copy, such graphic evidence of the rewards of royal service and good counsel would be private, one of the

⁴⁸ On the history of this text in the Middle Ages, see Eamon, *Science and the Secrets of Nature*, 45–53.

⁴⁹ STC 17017, IMEV 935.

⁵⁰ See Neville-Sington, 'Richard Pynson, King's Printer (1506–1529)', 156. On Somerset's career, see Hughes, 'Somerset, Charles, first earl of Worcester (c.1460–1526)'.



Figure 23. San Marino, Calif., Huntington Library, 31404: Lydgate and Burgh's *Secrees of Old Philisoffres* (printed by Richard Pynson, 1511), *STC* 17017, A1r. Reproduced by permission of The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

king and his counselor's 'secrees'.⁵¹ But it remains likely that parts of Pynson's edition were intended not for Henry, and not even for others close to his person, but for more public circulation. When, in 1508, Margaret Beaufort was involved in the production of a De Worde edition of some of John Fisher's sermons, household records show that De Worde was paid for just a few copies of the edition—six bound and six unbound (perhaps, though this is not recorded, in addition to a fee for the printing).⁵² If De Worde printed a run of any more than twelve, the rest of the copies were presumably available for less mighty customers: merchant-class literates, members of the lower gentry, those of the secular and sometimes regular clergy, who consistently turn up in studies of the provenance of early English printed books, and whose ownership of such books has been described throughout this study.

The commercial value of a wide market for books to profit-making printers like Pynson or De Worde is readily apparent. Yet it is not this value, but rather the values of a noble patron, that are impressed upon Pynson's Lydgate edition in 1511. Benedict Burgh, the poet who completed the imperfect version of Lydgate's *Secrees* that came into his hands, values *Secrees* as the work of an author. He says he follows 'the sotyl trace' 'lefft of Iohn lydgate | wel knowyng þe musys nyne' and in doing so aligns the steps of the monk with those of other *auctores* named in the text: Ptolemy, 'Petir petrarke', Alanus, St Francis.⁵³ For Pynson, who nowhere stresses the identity of either writer of this book (he merely reproduces marginal and internal evidence of authorship found in most manuscripts at the break between Lydgate and Burgh's texts) the matter of authority is more difficult. In c.1510 the 'sotelte' of Pynson's printing business was described by the defendants of charges he brought to Chancery, as I argued in Chapter 2. In the 1511 *Secrees* he is concerned to represent his work as something more than a craft: to stress his royal office and noble patronage of his task. The 1511 *Secrees* announces itself as work done at the command of the courtier Somerset and then outdoes even this lofty definition of the work of the

⁵¹ See Carlson, *English Humanist Books*, 147–8, on decoration of the Carmeliano and More books, and ch. 2 on politicking and manuscript presentation generally. See also Edwards and Meale, 'The Marketing of Printed Books in Late Medieval England', on Pynson and other printers' use of royal insignia to promote printed books, 103–13. For Somerset's constablenesship, from 21 May 1509, see Cokayne *et al.* (eds.), *The Complete Peerage*, xii(2). 848.

⁵² STC 10902, *Fruytfull Saynges*; for the arrangements about copies, see Powell, 'Lady Margaret Beaufort and Her Books', 228–9.

⁵³ Lydgate, *Secrees*, ll. 1503, 1582, 1543, 1508.

printer in the colophon, which names ‘Rycharde Prynson [*sic*] / Prynter vnto the kynges noble grace’ (H4v). The book bears the printer’s own, recently-adopted heraldic device as well as the insignia of his patron and his monarch.⁵⁴

Pynson’s claim to the title of king’s printer in the 1511 *Secrees* is something new in the context of this study. No earlier scribal or printed copy of a text by Chaucer or Lydgate makes such a direct connection between a book’s producer and his king. However, it was the account of Pynson’s work rather than the work itself that was new in 1511. The production of manuscripts for English monarchs is attested; Caxton and William de Machlinia printed statutes and propaganda for Richard III and Henry VII in the early 1480s; Caxton is described as king’s printer in a 1482 annotation in a book by a fellow mercer, presumably because of his many noble and royal patrons.⁵⁵ The Parisian printer Anthoine Vérard supplied books to Henry VII and in the 1490s payments were made to ‘printers at Westminster’—presumably those at De Worde’s large premises—from the royal purse.⁵⁶ However, any account of the relationship between English monarchs, scribes, and the earliest printers depends upon scattered evidence; arrangements were apparently flexible and their nature is not described explicitly in surviving books or records. The printer William Faques’s effort to fashion himself as *regius impressor* in colophons from 1504 thus marks a change.⁵⁷ This change may be likened to the new representation of the medieval author in printed books, or to Charles Somerset, Lord Herbert’s decision to create a book that graphically represents his relationship with the Tudor monarch. Some Tudor courtiers found in the printed book a useful space for the

⁵⁴ McKerrow, *Printers’ and Publishers’ Devices in England & Scotland, 1485–1640*, Pynson no. 9b. Edwards and Meale, ‘The Marketing of Printed Books in Late Medieval England’.

⁵⁵ See Sutton and Visser-Fuchs, *Richard III’s Books*, 254–6; fig. 77 is a reproduction of the inscription in a copy of the 1482 *Polycronicon*, STC 13438, by the London mercer William Purde who writes that he bought the book in 1482 ‘a Willelmo Caxton, regis impressore’.

⁵⁶ See Winn, *Anthoine Vérard*, and Plomer, ‘Bibliographical Notes from the Privy Purse Expenses of King Henry the Seventh’, 300.

⁵⁷ He labels himself such in a Latin Psalter, STC 16257, certainly printed in that year and then in several other books, 1504–6. Henry VII had a royal stationer, Peter Actors, and a royal librarian (a role apparently occupied by Faques by 1509, as he is described as keeper of the king’s library at the time of Henry’s death). The role of king’s printer may have grown out of these offices but as no grant to Faques is recorded, the nature of the office was probably still uncertain, and we rely on Faques’s own account of it to trace it (Grant Ferguson, ‘A Study of English Book-Trade Privileges during the Reign of Henry VIII,’ 42–3).

promotion of their political status. It was, likewise, useful for printers to make their various private arrangements with royal officials and the monarch himself a matter of record: it was—as was an ascription to some worthy writer—a way to promote, to describe the value, of their work and the products of their presses. In 1506, Pynson, who had been paid for official work before this time, took over the title, and so the rather loosely defined office, of king's printer from William Faques, first recording it against his name in the colophon to the 1506 *Expositio hymnorum* and doing so again in an edition of *Statutes* in 1508.⁵⁸ In 1509 the accession of a new king seems to have raised the stakes for Pynson and some of his fellow printers. At about this time Pynson began to describe himself with more regularity in the same way as he presents himself in the 1511 *Secrees*, as '[p]rynter vnto the kynges noble grace'. In several books printed in 1509, De Worde similarly names himself as printer to Lady Margaret Beaufort. He, like Caxton before him, had printed several books for the queen mother. It is unlikely that the new title represented any official change in their relationship.⁵⁹ The promotion of a previously private arrangement was simply a useful and not inaccurate way to redefine the labour of printing. An author might make a book look good; the king and his mother made it look very grand indeed.

From 1512, Pynson was able to consolidate his account of his work by other means. Many of the books he printed from this time were not merely printed for the king, but printed within a developing system of royal privilege, 'cum privilegio'. There is little record of how privileges worked in this early period, but later records suggest that the exclusive right to print a text was conferred upon a printer by the king for a specific period (usually a few years). Up to 1518, Pynson's privileges were issued for 'official' publications only—law books, statutes, and proclamations. From 1519 onwards his books describe a more general patent, giving him rights over other publications he had arranged.⁶⁰ The new system of privileges, a distinctive aspect of book production in print as opposed to manuscript, suggests the value of mass production not merely for

⁵⁸ STC 16117.5 and 9266. For earlier payments to Pynson and earlier royal commissions for him, see Edwards and Meale, 'The Marketing of Printed Books in Late Medieval England', 113, and Neville-Sington, 'Pynson, Richard (c.1449–1529/30)'.

⁵⁹ See Jones and Underwood, *The King's Mother*, 180–2, 186–7, and Powell, 'Lady Margaret Beaufort and Her Books', esp. 230, for the seven books De Worde printed under Margaret's name in 1509.

⁶⁰ See Grant Ferguson, 'A Study of English Book-Trade Privileges during the Reign of Henry VIII', 25; Plant, *The English Book Trade*, 100–9. On all these points, see also Neville-Sington, 'Press, Politics and Religion'.

profit-making printers, whose investments were protected by privileges, but also for a powerful, governing elite. The products of the press had political uses: the reach of a printer's work was worth the royal fees it attracted and it was also reason to develop new systems for the controlled dissemination of official texts.

The 1513 Pynson edition of Lydgate's *Troy Book*, the first printed version of that text, fits tidily with this account of some of the semi-official work of the early English press.⁶¹ It is, like the *Secrees*, a kind of mirror for princes, an exemplary as well as admonitory narrative of chivalric, belligerent kingship. In print, however, it reflects not only Lydgate's nuanced ideas about politic governance, but the immediate concerns of the printer, Pynson, and his royal patron, Henry VIII. Ideas about authorship are subsumed within a paratextual framework that stresses the propagandistic and topical value of the author's text and the work of printer and monarch in realizing its political potential. Woodcuts show the book in the hands of 'Johnn Lydgate monke of the Monastery of Bury' (+2v) in his study and in a presentation scene at court (A1r, see Fig. 24).⁶² But in Pynson's edition, the

influence of his myȝti grace,
þat called is of clerkis, dout[e]lles,
þe souereyn lord and þe prince of pes
(v. 3414–16),

—in Lydgate's text the might of Henry V, in Pynson's the comparable might of Henry VIII—is privileged over the influence of the clerk. The title page bears a device that marks this as a royal book, with royal arms and mottoes, the Beaufort portcullis badge, and the crowned Tudor rose (see Fig. 25). In the same year the device was used by Pynson for an edition of Henry VIII's *Statutes*.⁶³ Within the book, paratext mentions Lydgate insistently and repeatedly but also inscribes, at the end of the table,

the commaundement of oure Soueraygne Lorde the kynge Henry the. viij. By
Richarde Pynson/ prynter vnto his most noble grace. (+2v)

⁶¹ *STC* 5579, *IMEV* 2516.

⁶² The first of these is Hodnett, *English Woodcuts, 1480–1535*, no. 1510, also used by Pynson for one of his editions of Alexander Barclay's texts and for the 1520? *Testament* of Lydgate, discussed below. The woodcut presentation scene is Hodnett, *English Woodcuts, 1480–1535*, no. 1962. See Smith, 'Woodcut Presentation Scenes in Books Printed by Caxton, De Worde and Pynson'.

⁶³ *STC* 9361.

The Prologue of the Translatoure.



O Myghty Mars þy wylth sterne lyght
In Armys hall þy power & þy myght
And named art from est to occident
The myghty lord/ the god Armys potent
That with thy myght/ of thy strenght rede
By influence/ doest thy byddell lede
Of chynatrie/ as soueraigne and patron
Full hote and drye/ of complexion
Frous and wode/ and malencolyk
And of nature/ bynt and collyryk
Of colour shewyng/ lyke the fyrie glede
Whole ferce lokes/ ben as full of dyde
As the leuene/ that alghyeth lowe
Downe by the skay/ from Iubiders bowe
Thy strenghts ben/ so passyng dyspytous
To loke vpon/ inly furyous.
And Canisr/ art with thy fryebemys
Of werre and stryfe/ in many sondry reamys
Whose lordshipp is/ mooste in Capricorne
But in the boke/ is thy power loyne
And Canisr art/ of conek/ and of stryfe
Nowe for the loue/ of Vulcanus wyfe
With whom whylom/ þy were at myschef take
So helpe me now/ onely for hir sake
And for the loue/ of thy bellous
That with the dwellyth/ beyonde Circea

In Lybe londe/ vpon the londes rede
So be my helpe/ in this great neede
To do socour/ my style to directte
And of my penne/ the treacy to correctte
Whiche barayne is/ of aureat lycoure
But in thy grace/ I fynde some socoure
For to conuey/ it with thyne influence
That stumblen aye/ for faute of eloquence
For to reherse/ or wyte any wyde
Now helpe/ o mars/ þy art of knyghthode lord
And halt of manhode/ the magnificence
And other goddesse/ of prudence
This werke teplepte/ that ye nat refuse
But maketh Clio/ for to be my muse
With hir suster/ that on perne a dwelle
In Circea/ by Clycon the welle
Remynge full clere/ with strenghts cristailyn
And callid is/ the welle Caballyn
That sprynges by/ touche of the pegase
And helpe also/ o thou calliope
That were moder/ vnto Opyheus
Whose byttes were/ so melodious
That the werbes/ of his reformyng charpe
Appele byde/ the bytter woordes sharpe
Bothe of parchas/ and furies infernall
And Cerberus/ so cruell founde at all

A.

Figure 24. San Marino, Calif., Huntington Library, 60780: Lydgate's *Troy Book* (printed by Richard Pynson, 1513), *STC* 5579, A1r. Reproduced by permission of The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

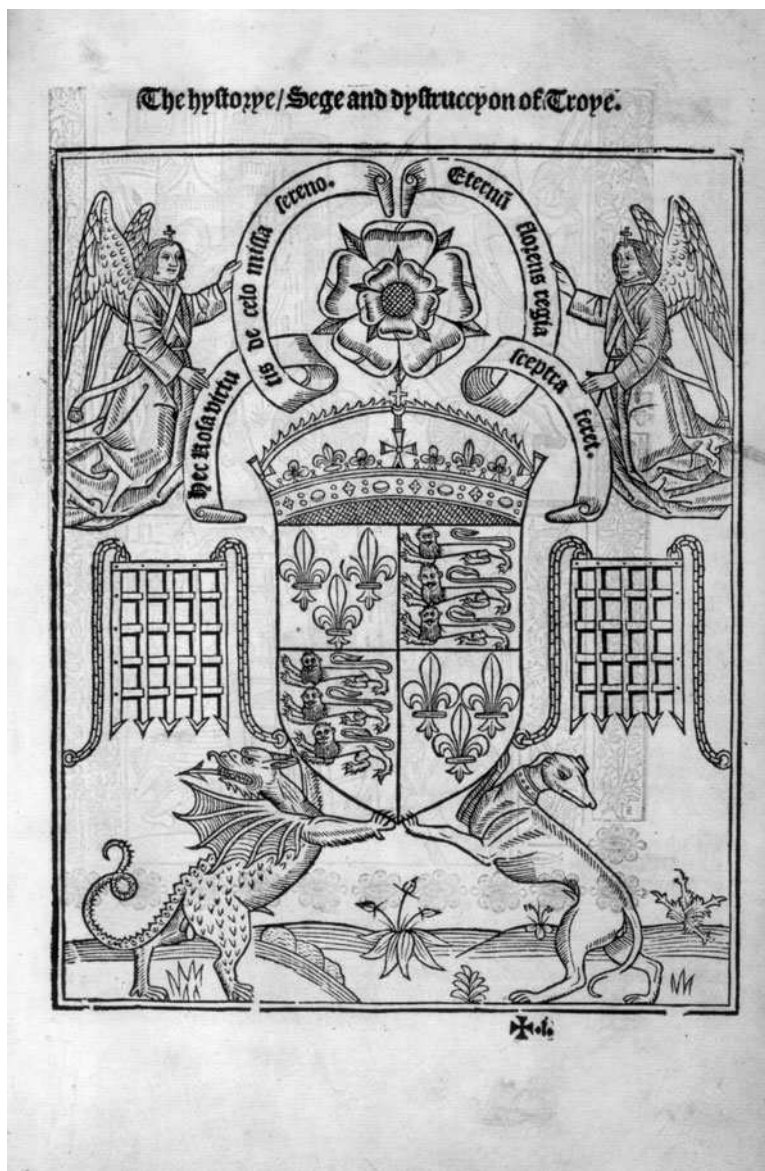


Figure 25. San Marino, Calif., Huntington Library, 60780: Lydgate's *Troy Book* (printed by Richard Pynson, 1513), *STC* 5579, +1r. Reproduced by permission of The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

The book becomes a surface upon which the printer can validate his work and by which monarchical authority is aggrandized. It has some share in an iconography of power—in the replication of images of crowns, thrones, orbs, sceptres, swords, and heraldic devices upon livery, badges, plate, coins, wall paintings, and hangings typical of the treasuries and chambers of medieval and Tudor princes.⁶⁴ John Watts writes that ‘the routinisation of [such] images, their use in certain contexts—particularly in the absence of the king—[made] them into vectors of state power’.⁶⁵ One surviving copy of Pynson’s *Troy Book* was printed on vellum and perhaps, as such, intended for circulation among those, like Charles Somerset, Lord Herbert, who had access to private displays of royal magnificence.⁶⁶ Other copies, issued (more routinely) on paper, were designed in part to magnify the status of the monarch before the larger public reached by the new products of the press.

Henry VIII had reason to impose an image of himself as a mighty and belligerent king, a Henry V *redivivus*, on a wide readership in 1513. In 1511, England had entered into a Holy League with Julius II, Venice, and Spain against France and, from this point on, Henry VIII endeavoured to win the support of his council and the public for a war against France.⁶⁷ Several printed texts, and several of Pynson’s already busy presses, seem to have been tied up by Henry’s martial project. In 1512 Henry and his chief servant Cardinal Wolsey made use of Pynson’s press to issue in print a declaration from the pope absolving French subjects from allegiance to Louis XII.⁶⁸ Pynson printed James Whytstons’s *De iusticia & sanctitate belli* and *The gardyners passetaunce touchyng the outrage of fraunce* in 1512; and a new edition of the *Ordenaunces of warre*, with virulently anti-French additions, in 1513.⁶⁹

The orchestrated use of the press to promote the English cause in 1512–13 and the forms of the 1511 edition of Lydgate’s *Secrees* and the

⁶⁴ See Ailes, ‘Heraldry in Medieval England’.

⁶⁵ Watts, ‘Looking for the State in Later Medieval England’, 245.

⁶⁶ For the courtly associations of books printed on parchment or vellum (usually presentation copies), see Spencer, ‘Antoine Vêrard’s Illuminated Vellum Incunables’. Pynson’s vellum *Troy Book*, Camb. Magdalene Pepys 2257, has short French verse inscriptions in the same secretary hand signed ‘Bryan le maluerst [Bryan the badly-versed/turned]’ and ‘wynyfyde wylde’. I suspect, but have not been able to establish, that this is Sir Francis Bryan.

⁶⁷ On Henry’s campaign and the press, see Wang, ‘The Image of St George and the Dragon’.

⁶⁸ *STC* 25947.7; see Slavin, ‘The Gutenberg Galaxy and the Tudor Revolution’.

⁶⁹ Respectively *STC* 25585; *STC* 11562.5; *STC* 9333.

1513 *Troy Book* together suggest that, for a Tudor elite, the printed book had very specifically political uses. However, this chapter began with an account of the slippery meanings of political writing. The printing of Lydgate's work in this period may ultimately direct attention back to the ambiguity of, and to more ambiguous uses for, medieval advisory texts. In 1527, Pynson issued a new edition of Lydgate's *Fall of Princes*.⁷⁰ The printer made some changes to the format of the edition, which had been printed in 1494 and was described in Chapter 2. The title page bears a woodcut presentation scene (see Fig. 26). The author is missing: it is the book's recipient, nimbed and in clerical dress and watched by his courtiers, who is represented. The woodcut was imported by Pynson from France and first used in his 1506 *Kalender of shepherdes*. Anthoine Vérard, whose supply of books to Henry VII and materials to Pynson is described in earlier chapters, had used the image, which itself derived from French manuscript miniatures, in the Parisian edition of a Scots translation of the *Kalender* in 1503, and in a number of earlier books. Pynson placed it on the front of his edition of Robert Fabyan's chronicles in 1516. Presumably it was a useful generic presentation scene for a printer in the habit of supplying books to, and printing them for, the court, as Vérard and Pynson were.⁷¹ In this sense Pynson opens the 1527 edition of *The Fall* as he closes it, by describing his work as 'printer vnto the kynges moste noble grace' (2P8r).

Other books may open the image up to a more complex reading, however. A faint impression of the generic forms of Pynson's title page is evident in the woodcut made for the 1523 edition of Skelton's *Garlande of laurell*, printed by Richard Faques. The seated man wears the same clerical robes as Pynson's figure (robes described by Hodnett for the *Kalender–Fall* woodcut as those of a cardinal) although he is at his desk rather than on a throne, and he is watched by a man in courtly dress in front of a small crowd at the very margins of the scene. He is intent upon a book, but it is unclear whether he is meant to represent the writer or a reader of that book. I have argued elsewhere that the uncertainty may be intentional.⁷² In 1523–4, Skelton sought or was tempted into

⁷⁰ STC 3176: contains IMEV 1168.

⁷¹ Pynson's *Kalender* is STC 22408; Vérard's is STC 22407; Fabyan's *New cronycles of Englande and of Fraunce* is STC 10659. Hodnett, *English Woodcuts, 1480–1535*, no. 1512, and 39–40. See Brown, *Poets, Patrons, and Printers*, 118–21, and for more detail Gillespie, 'The Lydgate Canon in Print from 1476 to 1534'.

⁷² The book is STC 22610; the image is Hodnett, *English Woodcuts, 1480–1535*, no. 2056.

Chere begynneth the boke of Johan Bochas/ discryuing the fall of pri-
ces/ princelles/ and other nobles: Translated in to Englyshe by John Lyd-
gate monke of Bury/ begynnynge at Adam and Eve/ and endynge
with kyng Johan of Fraunce/ taken prysoner at
Bopeters by prince Edwarde.



Figure 26. London, British Library, C. 12. i. 8: Lydgate's *Fall of Princes* (printed by Richard Pynson, 1527), *STC* 3176, A1r. Reproduced with the permission of the British Library.

reconciliation with his old enemy Cardinal Wolsey, the ‘fatte ... magott, bred of a flesshe flye’ whom he had attacked vociferously in *Speke Parrot* two years earlier.⁷³ Jane Griffiths has recently argued that the revision and publication of his *Garlande of laurell* was one result of Skelton’s new alliance: the genre of dream vision ‘indicates how far Skelton has come from his previous satire’.⁷⁴ The woodcut may measure similar distance, by depicting Wolsey, in his cardinal’s costume, reading Skelton’s book while the poet and others look on nervously from the margins of the court. If, conversely, it is taken to be a picture of Skelton, who was also a cleric, then as Griffiths argues the poet’s authorial identity exceeds the mendicant repackaging of his text. He is at his writing desk, in the act of literary production. He occupies the space opened up for him (and perhaps at his behest) by his printers’ assignation of the titles ‘vates’, ‘poeta’, and ‘laureatus’ to so many of his poems in the 1520s. He demands that he be likened to the divinely inspired and the laurel-wreathed authors of the classical and medieval past: his fame depends on timeless literary work rather than temporal patronage.

The image—of author *or* patron—that we find at the beginning of Skelton’s book is, perhaps deliberately, ambivalent. The same may be true of the 1527 *Fall of Princes*. Like Skelton’s book, this one seems disposed to remove a temporal patron from its own literary history. The title page rubric reads:

Here begynneth the boke of Johan Bochas/ discryuing the fall of princes/ princesses/ and other nobles: Translated into Englysshe by Johnⁿ Lydgate monke of Bury/begynnyng at Adam and Eue/and endyng with kyng Iohan of Fraunce / taken prisoner at Poyters by prince Edward. (A1r)

The description of Duke Humphrey’s commission of the text, which appears in the 1494 Pynson edition, has been excised. The information is still available to a close reader of Lydgate’s text: the monk names his patron at several points.⁷⁵ But Pynson seems either to deem a distant and disgraced Lancastrian prince an unsuitable source of authority for this book, or to intend that this text be loosened from its ties to a specific

⁷³ *John Skelton: The Complete English Poems, Speke Parrot*, l. 502. See Gillespie, ‘Introduction: Bibliography and Early Tudor Texts’, 166–7 and fig. 1, for an image of the title page. Smith, ‘Woodcut Presentation Scenes in Books Printed by Caxton, De Worde and Pynson’, thinks that the similarly clad cleric in a *Cronycle* made for the duke of Buckingham, *STC* 13256, may suggest Wolsey.

⁷⁴ See Griffiths, ‘What’s in a Name?’, 231.

⁷⁵ For instance, *Fall of Princes*, Prologue, 393, 440–1. Note that the envoy of ‘Greenacres’, *IMEV* 524, printed in 1494, is also omitted.

history. He perhaps hoped to position it in relation to a new temporal patron. Two woodcuts from the 1494 edition were replaced with images made by more highly skilled, probably continental artisans in the 1527 edition. One shows a king who is more Henrician in aspect than his 1494 original.⁷⁶ Another replaces an image of Boccaccio encountering the goddess *fortuna* before his writing desk. At the top of *fortuna's* wheel, in the place conventionally allotted to pope or king, is a cardinal. Fat-faced and flat-hatted he is a distinctive portrait of Wolsey, prince pre-eminent in the English court (see Fig. 27). In summer 1527, at the height of his career, Wolsey made a long visit to France to sign the Treaty of Amiens and to see how the French might respond to the great matter of the king's divorce. He was accompanied by an extraordinary retinue: 900 men (Thomas More among them) made slow progress from London to Calais and into France. There they were greeted at every post by pageants, devices, and crowds commanded to cheer. The spectacle allocated a new role to the cardinal:

Wolsey had been to the fore in [previous diplomatic] pomp and ceremonial, [but] none of these propagandist shows had included, as part of their symbolism, representations of the Cardinal; they had been almost entirely concerned with the monarchs and their pretensions.

In 1527 at Amiens, after similar displays elsewhere, Wolsey was to be seen 'joining the walls of the temple ... ; Wolsey saving the ship of the Church; Wolsey uniting England and France ... ; Wolsey as holy and triumphant star inaugurating a new golden age!'⁷⁷

The woodcut device depicting Wolsey in the 1527 *Fall* matches the increasingly messianic self-image that the world presented to the cardinal. His good governance is implied *and* secured by the representation of Fortune's caprice: 'Bi othres fallyng [princes might] themsilff correcte', suggests Lydgate (*Fall*, II. 154). Duke Humphrey is great precisely because, like the author Bochas, before the wheel of Fortune,

Stable in study alwey he doth contune,
Settyng a-side alle chaungis of Fortune.

(*Fall*, I. 389–90)

⁷⁶ These are Hodnett, *English Woodcuts, 1480–1535*, nos. 1947 and 1954, and 33–5; the first is reproduced in Gillespie, 'The Lydgate Canon in Print from 1476 to 1534', fig. 6.

⁷⁷ Anglo, *Spectacle, Pageantry, and Early Tudor Policy*, 210, 229, and, for broad discussion, ch. 6.



Figure 27. London, British Library, C. 12. i. 8: Lydgate's *Fall of Princes* (printed by Richard Pynson, 1527), *STC* 3176, 2D1r. Reproduced with the permission of the British Library.

Wolsey now earns the same praise. The wheel of fortune is—like a book of proverbs, a collection of regiminal secrets, or a pageant or device—a mirror. In it the cardinal-prince sees himself in the best possible light. He is well governed and a supreme governor, in command of chance, political hierarchy, and the advisory compacts that guarantee stable rule. He appears, as he does in the woodcut image, as one who has just clambered his way to the top of *fortuna*'s wheel by his own virtue and might.

Paul Strohm has recently argued that, in their reworking of Boccaccio's Latin original, Lydgate and Laurent de Premierfait (Lydgate's direct source) create precisely this radical new political proposition. The mightiest prince can straddle *fortuna*'s wheel; with properly literary guidance, with careful study, he can 'contune' there unchanging. But such sanguine hopes for the efficacy of advisory traditions cannot set aside the revolutionary tendency of the *de casibus* tradition itself—its insistence on the openness of the past to the concerns of the present, on the unpredictable force of *fortuna* and her repeated affronts to settled arrangements of power.⁷⁸ On the one hand, what is unruly about the *de casibus* tradition is overruled by the king's printer in 1527, as it is by Lydgate when he describes Duke Humphrey's fortune-defying stable study. The book and its flattering images are reflections of Wolsey's authority, a share of which authority may be claimed by the book and its producer. On the other hand, the imagery refracts as well as reflects images of power, much as it does in the 1523 *Garlande of laurell*. The image of *fortuna* is Janus-faced in the 1527 woodcut; she had just one face in 1494.⁷⁹ Flattery may work against the flattered. A Latin tag replicated from paratext in the manuscript copytext in the 1494 *Fall*, and printed again in 1527, 'nihil insolens quam potens rusticus [no one has such overweening pride as the upstart churl]' (H1v), may have had circumstantial significance for a reader subject to the unwelcome governance of a butcher's son, 'bred of a flesshe-flye'.⁸⁰ And it might strike some readers of the 1527 *Fall*, especially those whom Wolsey had marginalized—Skelton and his coterie, including members of Pynson's own London merchant-class

⁷⁸ Strohm, *Politique*, ch. 2; I must thank Professor Strohm for allowing me to read drafts of this chapter and for some very stimulating discussion.

⁷⁹ The original image is Hodnett, *English Woodcuts, 1480–1535*, no. 1953.

⁸⁰ On Lydgate's *Fall* and other medieval analogues for anti-Wolsey satire, see Walker, *John Skelton and the Politics of the 1520s*, 124–53.

community;⁸¹ the Boleyn faction, who may already have been moving against the cardinal while he was in France—that the cardinal on fortune’s wheel in Pynson’s 1527 edition of Lydgate’s text is poised to fall.⁸² By 1529, Wolsey had fallen. Any intended allusion to him in the 1527 *Fall* had been rendered exemplary—a facet rather than an object of the advisory content of the *de casibus* tradition. ‘Books’, as Skelton observes, ‘remayneth of recorde.’⁸³ Those that Pynson printed that matched the arrangements of power at the Tudor court could not, and perhaps were never meant to, ‘se[t] a-side alle chaungis’. That which *The Fall* represents and endeavours to contain, worldly change and the vagaries of fortune, made the book as relevant to readers in the 1520s as the fifteenth century, and still relevant when Pynson’s materials and probably stock passed to the premises of other printers and booksellers in 1530, and *The Fall* was placed on a new set of shelves, and sold in a new set of political circumstances.

LYDGATE’S LIVES UP TO 1534

In 1531, the printer Robert Redman produced a quarto edition of Lydgate’s *Life of Our Lady*.⁸⁴ At the front is a conventional image. Mary is depicted reading; a scroll bearing an abbreviated form of Gabriel’s greeting (‘ave, gracia plena’) unravels above her (see Fig. 28).⁸⁵ The image secures the value of the printed devotional book at the same moment that it allows for the sort of readerly identification with the text that Lydgate describes when he writes of Christ’s appearance to those who celebrate the feast of the Epiphany:

But o, alas, ther is but a lykenesse
Of portrature that doth us grete offence,
For we may not have full the blissednesse
Of thy visage ne of thy presence;
And so to us grete harme doth aparence,

⁸¹ See Scattergood, *Reading the Past*, 285, on Skelton and Londoners’ objections to Wolsey’s policies.

⁸² On the enmity to Wolsey of those, including the Boleyns, closest to the king, by the spring of 1527, see Gwyn, *The King’s Cardinal*, 572–5.

⁸³ John Skelton: *Complete English Poems*, Garlande, l. 89.

⁸⁴ STC 17025, IMEV 2574.

⁸⁵ On this image, see Driver, *The Image in Print*, ch. 4.

Whan that we sene of our desyre we fayle,
We may well pleyne but it may not avayle.⁸⁶

James Simpson observes of this stanza that ‘pictures are in no way condescended to as the sign of popular or illiterate culture; on the contrary the “picture” is indistinguishable from the text itself’.⁸⁷ In Redman’s edition, the printed book is implicated in this close and traditional identification of word and image. Readers—especially the female readers who are often linked to small, decorated medieval books of devotion (and to Lydgate’s Christian ‘lives’ in particular)⁸⁸—may take this volume in hand and see in the woodcut, in Latin words familiar from the liturgy, and again in Lydgate’s text, ‘a lykenesse’ of their own devotional experience, as well as Mary’s ‘blissidnesse’. However the result is not straightforward identification with the Virgin or with the pious writer, but rather the ‘aparence’ of a gap between divine ‘presence’ and personal desire that is the basis for Lydgate’s evocative, affective, ‘o, alas’.

It was Caxton who first invited readers of printed books to respond to Lydgate’s *Life of Our Lady* as a printed manual for devotion as well as an authored English poem. Caxton’s edition begins, as I note in Chapter 2, with a description of the patronage of Lydgate’s work by Henry V, but it concludes with rime royal versions of the final offices of the liturgical day which the printer instructs his readers to ‘say’. Redman did not reprint these offices, but he did supply an illustration that demands, as Caxton does, that readers incorporate the book into their private devotions in complex ways. And both Redman and Caxton, in the process of packaging Lydgate’s text in this way, elevate spiritual experience over or at least alongside other possible meanings for the text, including authorial and political ones. It is the devout, readerly ‘I’ to be located in Lydgate’s account of what ‘we ... desyre’ that gives the book value.

Redman, who had spent much of the previous decade competing acrimoniously with Richard Pynson for a share in the law book market, was by 1531 operating out of his deceased competitor’s premises at the sign of the George on Fleet Street and making use of some of his materials.⁸⁹ In about 1520, Pynson had produced his own edition of a pious life by Lydgate that Redman had probably seen: the monk’s autobiographical

⁸⁶ *Life of Our Lady*, v. 638–44.

⁸⁷ *Reform and Cultural Revolution*, 419.

⁸⁸ Penketh, ‘Women and Books of Hours’; Edwards, ‘Fifteenth-Century Collections of Female Saints’ Lives’; and Boffey, ‘Middle English Lives’.

⁸⁹ See Wang, ‘The Image of St George and the Dragon’, and Gillespie, ‘Redman, Robert (d. 1540)’.

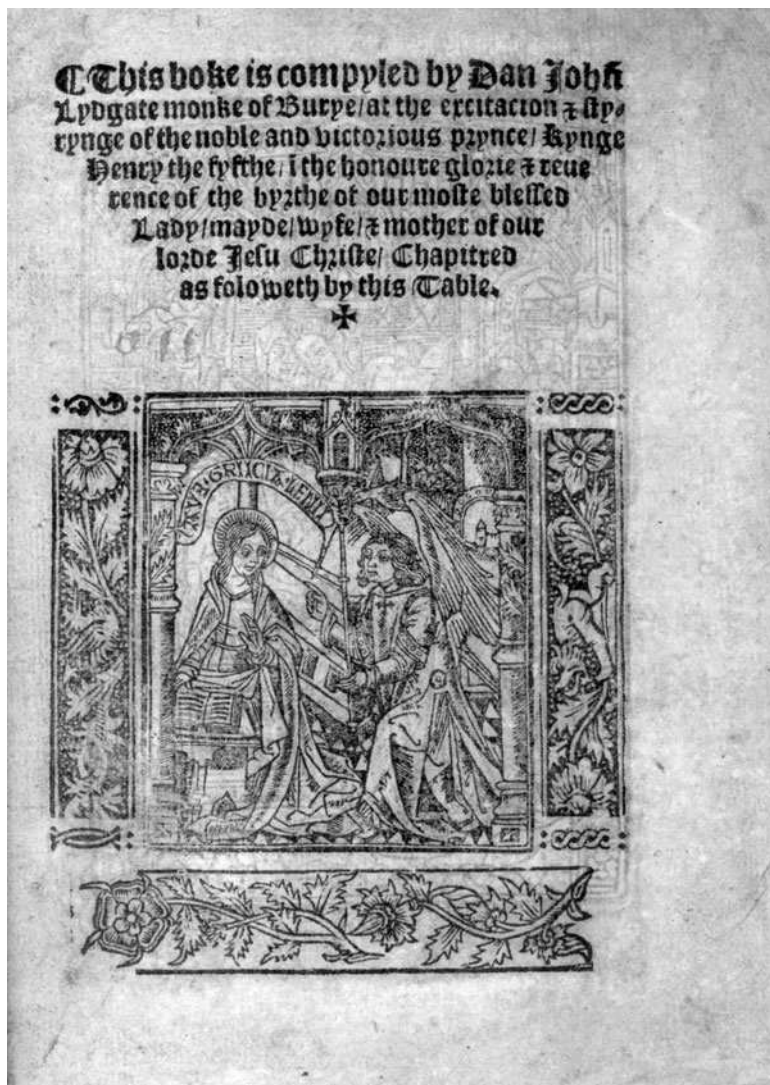


Figure 28. San Marino, Calif., Huntington Library, 62372: Lydgate's *Life of Our Lady* (printed by Robert Redman, 1531), *STC* 17025, A1r. Reproduced by permission of The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

Testament. Both the content and the visual arrangement this book align it with Caxton and Redman's editions of *The Life of Our Lady*. In the poem, it is the status of a word—seen, spoken, remembered, written—that stops Lydgate in his troublesome 'passage' in his fifteenth year:

Myd of a cloyster, depicte vpon a wall,
 I savgh a crucifyx, whos woundes were not smalle,
 With this [word] 'vide,' wrete there besyde,

 The which word, whan I dyd vndirstond,
 In my last age takyng the sentence,
 Theron remembryng, my penne I toke in honde,
 Gan to wryte with humble reuerence,
 On this word, 'vide', with humble diligence.⁹⁰

The result of Lydgate's remembering is a new text—a record not of the passage of his own life but of the meaning of Christ's, whose words from the cross are the very next written by the poet: 'Behold o man! lyft vp thyn eye and see' (l. 754). Such words are worth seeing and remembering. As Lydgate 'savgh ... | ... this "vide"', so does anyone who holds the book see Christ, the word made flesh. His address is picked out in the *ordinatio* of manuscript copies; in Pynson's edition it is marked 'nota' in the 'myd' of the page.⁹¹ Literary and visual devotion are not to be distinguished in such a book; the reader of the 1520? edition passes from the title-page, which has a generic scholar portrait that was also used for Lydgate in *The Troy Book* (Fig. 29), to an image of the crucified Christ on A1v (Fig. 30), which he or she then finds replicated at the book's end, C4r, before Pynson's heraldic device. The text is contained by these printed images, its front and back marked as a convenience to the bookseller, its forms familiar to those customers of the press whose purchases included either Lydgate's works or indulgenced images of pity and other books bearing the woodcut used by Pynson—books of hours, rosaries, and *The Pilgrimage of perfection* by William Bonde, one of the brethren of Syon Abbey.⁹² Pynson's marketing strategies are designed to realize precisely

⁹⁰ See *The Minor Poems of Lydgate: Part I*, ll. 742–51.

⁹¹ BL Harley 218 and Leiden, Leiden University Library, Vossius 9, mark Christ's speech with the words 'Iesus' and 'Vide'; other copies mark the division by illuminated capitals (*The Minor Poems of Lydgate: Part I*, 357).

⁹² Hodnett, *English Woodcuts, 1480–1535*, no. 1347; he describes the copy of this cut used for *horae* and *The rosary of our sauour Iesu* and Bonde's text in 1526 (*STC* 3277); and the use of similar images for indulgences, e.g. nos. 1318, 1330, 1333. Images of pity figuring Christ are *STC* 14077.6–7.18. See Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550–1640*, 131–2, and Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 106–9.



Figure 29. San Marino, Calif., Huntington Library, 61097: Lydgate's *Testament* (printed by Richard Pynson, 1520?), STC 17035, A1r. Reproduced by permission of The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

the movement for devotional material that Lydgate anticipates as he turns the Augustinian genre of confession in ‘my last age’, and a word, “vide”, from a cloister wall, into a text whose vernacularity and whose rich visual motifs direct it to a wide lay readership.⁹³ The word of God does not stop at the wall of Bury St Edmunds; it reaches as far as the products of Pynson’s London press.

As James Clark has recently argued, the relationship between the dissemination of vernacular, religious writing, the printing press, and the great English monastic houses is a topic that deserves further discussion. Pynson and others, most notably De Worde, appear to have forged commercial relationships as they printed texts for or by members of communities such as that at Syon Abbey.⁹⁴ After the closure of the early press at Oxford, almost all presses outside London and its environs before the reformation were likewise affiliated in some way with monasteries:⁹⁵ John Mychell, the Canterbury printer, worked in the ambit of St Augustines;⁹⁶ John Scolar, the Oxford printer, was supported by the abbey and convent of Abingdon;⁹⁷ Thomas Richard’s press was at the Benedictine Abbey of Tavistock;⁹⁸ and the St Albans printer of the 1480s and his successor in the 1530s, John Herford, were affiliated with that great Benedictine house.⁹⁹

James Simpson and G. W. Bernard have argued in different ways that it was partly those vital, worldly aspects of the culture of the regular clergy—vitality signalled here by monastic use of the new technology for book production—that made it necessary for the crown to suppress that

⁹³ See Boffey, ‘Lydgate, Henryson, and the Literary Testament’, on the generic, including documentary, affiliations of Lydgate’s *Testament*.

⁹⁴ Rhodes, ‘Syon Abbey and Its Religious Publications in the Sixteenth Century’, and Edwards and Meale, ‘The Marketing of Printed Books in Late Medieval England’, 115–16.

⁹⁵ Clark, ‘Print and Pre-Reformation Religion’; Duff, *The English Provincial Printers, Stationers, and Bookbinders to 1557*; Sessions, *A Printers’ Dozen* (note that some of the printers he describes, those in York, for instance, were in fact publishers, financing and selling the products of London and continental presses).

⁹⁶ Boffey, ‘John Mychell and the Printing of Lydgate in the 1530s’.

⁹⁷ He printed a breviary of Abingdon Use, *STC* 15792, 1528.

⁹⁸ His only known edition is *STC* 3200, a 1525 *Boke of Comfort*, John Walton’s c.1410 translation of Boethius.

⁹⁹ Barker, ‘The St Albans Press’; Herford printed, in addition to *The Life of SS Alban and Amphibal* (described below): a breviary, c.1535, *De aduentu*, *STC* 15793.5; the 1536 *Confutacyon of the fyrst parte of Frythes booke*, *STC* 12557; 1537 *Introduction for to learn*, *STC* 14117.7; and 1539? *A very declaracyon of the bond and free wyll of man*, *STC* 6456.5. A printer by the name of Herford who set up a press in London in the 1540s was probably the same man.



Figure 30. San Marino, Calif., Huntington Library, 61097: Lydgate's *Testament* (printed by Richard Pynson, 1520?), STC 17035, A1v. Reproduced by permission of The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

culture at the moment of the English break with Rome.¹⁰⁰ The history of the medieval author, the press, and the successive reformations of English religion after 1534 will be told in the next chapter, but it begins as the story of Lydgate's lives in print and the story of the press's place within the English cloister comes to a rather complicated end. This end is sometimes apparent in the books that bore Lydgate's texts to early modern readers. A copy of Lydgate's *Testament*, for instance, was still available to a reader in the 1550s *Sammelband* that I described earlier in this chapter. The book also contains the only known copy of John Mychell's 1534? edition of *The Churl and the Bird* which that printer appears to have produced while in the ambit of St Augustines; a copy of the 1520? *Prouerbes of Lydgate*; and a 1540 edition of a moralizing *Maydens crosse rewe* that begins by evoking Lydgate's 'fables' of 'moralyte' as a literary example.¹⁰¹ The *Sammelband* opens, that is, upon evidence of sustained interest in Lydgate's texts, including one of his most devout works, in the post-reformation and post-dissolution context. However, this meaning for the book is not quite fixed. Alongside Lydgate's works the reader also finds a pamphlet penned by the propagandist Richard Morison for Cromwell shortly after the Act of Supremacy, an Edwardian edition of a Lollard 'Crede', and protestant policy on 'makyng and consecratyng' the new clergy.¹⁰² Likewise, along with the moralizing, medieval *Churl and the Bird*, the Canterbury printer Mychell also printed evangelical works by John Frith and William Tyndale, shortly after the break with Rome.¹⁰³

I argue in the next chapter that the complexity of a reformation textual culture rendered largely obsolete the saints' lives, works of traditional Christian devotion, and moralized fables that had occupied English presses before 1534. The new context for English religion also marks a sudden change in the context for the reception of Lydgate's literary 'remembryng', a change readily apparent in the last edition of a life by Lydgate printed in the early modern period—and one of the last books produced by a printer to a monastery—*Saint Albon and Saint*

¹⁰⁰ Simpson's *Reform and Cultural Revolution* stresses the necessary violence of Henry's suppression of a 'reformist' medieval culture that included the regular clergy; Bernard argues for the vitality of traditional religion but equally for the popularity of a movement to reform its worldliness and corruption ('Vitality and Vulnerability in the Late Medieval Church').

¹⁰¹ *STC* 17192, A1r.

¹⁰² For a full list of contents, see the section on Lydgate's *Prouerbes* above; on Morison's tract, see Simpson, *Reform and Cultural Revolution*, 239–41.

¹⁰³ Mychell's evangelical books are *STC* 24447.7, 24455.5, 11385, 11387.

Amphibalus, issued by John Herford at St Albans in 1534.¹⁰⁴ The abbey at St Albans had been founded by Offa on the site of Alban's martyrdom before the conquest and since that time, by papal authority, it had been exempt from episcopal intervention.¹⁰⁵ Its historical rights were jealously guarded, and central to the defence of those rights was a well-developed textual culture. Myths and facts, found and faked relics and documents, a great many of these telling the story of the foundation's patron saint, were collected and narrated to sustain the institution's identity. In 1439, Lydgate was employed to write the first vernacular life of St Alban. Cash payment—the first ever recorded for the production of an English text—was approved by the abbot, John Whethamstede.¹⁰⁶ Whethamstede was not around long enough to see what Lydgate describes, in Chaucerian fashion, as his 'litl boke' (*Saint Alban*, 1. 882) turned into an object suitable for the glory of St Alban. He left for a spell in London in 1440 and on his return in 1452, he was, according to abbey records, disappointed to find that his fellow monks had left the book 'in quarterniis [unbound in quires]'. At this time, to redress the neglect, he had the book decorated and placed in a casket at the abbey to magnify the institution and both its founder's and his own reputation ('pro honore ipsius imperpetuum continuando [to promote his good name in perpetuity]').¹⁰⁷

The 1534 printed edition of Lydgate's book was also produced, according to the book's colophon, at the request of an abbot: 'Robert Catton/abbot of thexempte monasterye of saynt Alban' (Y4v). Catton became abbot of St Albans in 1531 after the king opposed the appointment of the prior of the abbey, the monks' own choice. It appears that Catton remained a king's man, collecting rewards as he relinquished properties to the crown, informing against townspeople whose talk seemed treasonous, and distancing himself from less cooperative

¹⁰⁴ *STC* 256, *IMEV* 3748.

¹⁰⁵ On exempt religious houses and the episcopacy in England in the later Middle Ages, see Swanson, *Church and Society in Late Medieval England*, 1–21.

¹⁰⁶ The record of payment is in the register of the common chest of St Albans: 'Item, cuidam monacho de Burgo Sancti Edmundi, propter translacionem vite sancti Albani in nostrum vulgare iij.li.vi.s.viii.d' (Pearsall, *John Lydgate (1371–1449)*, 59).

¹⁰⁷ Whethamstede served from 1420 to 1440 and, following a bout of ill health and matters needing litigation at the London courts, again from 1452 to 1461. See Howlett, 'Studies in the Works of John Whethamstede', 205–7, who prints this and other material from the *Liber benefactorum*. My thanks to Giancarlo Ciccia for his help refining my translations of abbey records.

members of his community.¹⁰⁸ In 1534, however, changes were afoot that appear to have made even Catton nervous. In that year Henry VIII declared his supremacy. The St Albans brethren were not in open opposition to the king, but the supremacy did mean that papal authority for exemption of ‘thexempte monsterye of saynt Albon’ had been appropriated by the crown. The story of St Alban and of Offa’s foundation suddenly had new importance. This was all the more problematic because, in 1502, some monks from St Pantaleon in Cologne had arranged for the printing of another book on St Alban, *De incliti et gloriosi protomartyris Anglie Albani*, which they had come to England to present to Henry VII.¹⁰⁹ According to the St Pantaleon tradition, Alban’s relics were translated to Ravenna by St Germanus in the time of Offa and then to Cologne: the English monastery’s foundational story was, by this new history, as empty as the shrine it rested upon. In 1534 the printer Herford, newly arrived at the abbey, was employed by Catton to paper over the cracks in the institution’s founding narrative. This required some effort: some of Herford’s formes for the text of Lydgate’s *Saint Albon*, as I argue elsewhere, had to be reset to accommodate a twenty-seven stanza interpolation defending the abbey’s claim to the relics, apparently penned too late for proper planning.¹¹⁰ The 1534 *Saint Albon* was also made to accommodate a timely prayer to Henry VIII, laid over Lydgate’s original prayer for Henry VI, and augmented by praise for

rial quene Anna / notable and famous
Indowed with grace / and vertu without pere

and Henry’s heir, ‘Elizabeth by name / both beautifull and gracious’, whose baptism Catton attended that year (Y3v).

It is both ironic and telling that the only vernacular *vita* for a saint to be printed in England between 1534 and the accession of Mary—and the only text printed that was actually ascribed to the Bury monk Lydgate in this period¹¹¹—should be so directly associated with the queen whose marriage to Henry VIII brought about the break with

¹⁰⁸ See Clark, ‘Reformation and Reaction at St Albans Abbey, 1530–58’.

¹⁰⁹ See Levison, ‘St. Alban and St. Albans’, and Baker, ‘The Cult of St Alban at Cologne’. The sixteenth-century controversy is described in Lydgate, *Saint Albon and Saint Amphibalus*, 200–1.

¹¹⁰ See Gillespie, ‘The Lydgate Canon in Print from 1476 to 1534’; the extra stanzas are edited, *Saint Albon*, 201–9.

¹¹¹ Note that the edition of *Stans Puer ad Mensam* produced by John Redman in Southwark around this time (1534–6?) contains an internal attribution to Lydgate (and in this book, Lydgate is praised in *The Book of Curtesye*).

Rome and who was known for her antipathy towards cults of English saints.¹¹² The 1534 *Saint Albon* shows that Lydgate's religious as well as secular texts and monastic as well as London presses were important to matters of 'polityk governaunce'. They too could be deployed within schemes to flatter and influence the Tudor prince and those close to him. However, the book also describes a profound change in the terms by which the English monarch related to his realm. In his *Life of SS Edmund and Fremund*, Lydgate says that both secular and religious must be 'by kyng Edmund in ther dew ordre set', that a strong king makes for a stable and whole nation. In mid-1530s England, monarchical shows of strength reordered the realm. They cancelled the possibility that those '[m]yd of a cloyster' might extend their influence into the world, and show English readers something of their devout 'desyre' in carefully penned and carefully printed books. In 1535 St Albans was first visited by Henry's agents and in 1539, Robert Stevenage, who replaced Catton as abbot in 1538, was forced to surrender the once exempt and powerful monastery.¹¹³ The medieval author had not, by his stable words, pious observances, or foundational histories, nor by his authoritative, ascribed example, set aside all changes. The official reformations of English religion had begun.

¹¹² See Simpson, *Reform and Cultural Revolution*, 404 n. 50, for a list of printed saints' lives to 1557. In about 1555, John Waley produced a new edition of a *Life of the glorious martyr saincte Katheryn* (STC 4813.8). See the next chapter on the hiatus in printed production of Lydgate's own writing between 1534 and 1554. On Boleyn and reform, see Ives, 'Anne Boleyn and the Early Reformation in England'; cf. the revisionist account in Bernard, 'Anne Boleyn's Religion'.

¹¹³ See Clark, 'Reformation and Reaction at St Albans Abbey, 1530–1558', 310–11.

5

The Press, the Medieval Author, and the English Reformations, 1534 to 1557

John Foxe was an enthusiastic early historian of the reformation printing press. '[T]hrough the lyght of printing', he writes in his 1570 *Actes and monuments*,

as by the singulare organe of the holy Ghost, *the* doctrine of the Gospell soundeth to all nations & countreys vnder heauen: and what God readeth to one man, is dispersed to many, and what is knowne in one nation, is opened to all.¹

The books that all men open at once, see with the same eyes, include, according to Foxe, 'Chaucers workes', which 'be all printed in one volume, and therefore knowen to all men'. These men find that the writer '(no doubt) saw in Religion as much almost, as euen we do now, and vttereth in his workes no lesse' (DDd4r). The 'lyght' of printing is thus cast upon that which is already illuminated; 'we' see with Chaucer's eyes; and there ceases to be a distinction between past and present, between disparate texts and the author's 'workes', between the wide reach of the press and the protestant remaking of the world.

Foxe's well-known account of the printing press matches that of his close associate John Bale. It is the proper role of the learned protestant to gather the writings of authors, writes Bale, for 'posteryte maye wele curse thys wycked facte of our age, thys vnreasonable spole of Englandes moste noble antiquities, vnless they be stayed ... by the art of pryntyng'.² The press and the writer are both instruments through which loss may be arrested, time stopped, God-given truth uttered and universally 'knowne'. In Foxe and Bale's writing, that which is 'opened

¹ STC 11223, Dd4r. See King, 'The Light of Printing'.

² In 1549 in the *The laborious journey & serche ... for Englandes antiquitees*, STC 15445, B2r.

to all' is thus also a radical limit upon openness. The press, Bale's lists of English authors, the idea of Chaucer's works—all these become part of what James Simpson has described as the revolutionary scheme of the Tudor age.³ In order that the medieval past might be incorporated to a 'singular' present, its dispersed energies must be narrowed and 'stayed'. It is one of the purposes of this chapter to consider the English reformation press and the printing and circulation of medieval texts in the context of its operation in just these terms. As Brian Cummings observes, words were the great matter at stake in this period both theologically and politically: what did they mean and what was their efficacy? Who could read and who utter them?⁴ The author had always been and so became a new protestant principle by which such questions could be addressed—a stamp of approval, a way of marking licit from illicit discourse, a mechanism to secure for the present not only book sales but a perfect past, sealed from change.

But the past is never quite sealed. Bale knows this as he worries about posterity (and well he might, given Simpson's careful measurement of his fraught but nevertheless 'unreasonable spoyl' of England's literary heritage). Foxe knows it in another way. His Chaucer is a masterpiece of equivocation, a poet who thought '(no doubt) ... almost as euen ... no lesse' than a reformer might. The faith of Bale and Foxe in the centralizing, protestantizing agency of the press and the twenty-two vision of those who produced the antique monuments they so wanted to admire could not quite discharge the worth of what they rejected—including five decades of orthodox Catholic printed book production⁵—and nor could they accommodate all the 'workes' that printers had grouped as Chaucer's *Workes* as easily as Foxe accommodates one that 'purely ... toucheth the highest matter, that is, the Communion', Thomas Usk's *The Testament of Love*. For Foxe, Usk's treatise is evidence that Chaucer 'was a right Wicleuian, or els was neuer any'.⁶ But one wonders if Foxe thought 'any' follower of Wyclif ever hoped for a strong papacy as Chaucer's great friend Gower does in his 'Praise of Peace'. Foxe notices this poem when he commends Gower

³ Simpson, *Reform and Cultural Revolution*, esp. ch. 1.

⁴ *The Literary Culture of the Reformation*.

⁵ Ibid., 1–20, and Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, esp. 77–87.

⁶ On the inclusion of *The Testament* in Thynne's *Workes*, the most useful study is Middleton, 'Thomas Usk's "Perdurable Letters"': Foxe refers to Usk's rather equivocal remarks on the real presence and on 2 Corinthians 3: 6 in the last few lines of his text; see also Prendergast, 'Chaucer's Doppelgänger'; and Forni, *The Chaucerian Apocrypha*, 93–4.

in *Actes*; it is 'placed in the later end of Chaucers workes' (DDd4r).⁷ The reformers' Chaucer is evidence of a determined effort to provide a limit to the meaning of such medieval texts, to generate an end for the medieval past, and make proper sense of the products of the press. But as such he is something that teeters perilously close in Foxe's account to 'neuer' being. He is someone who may instead measure what *was*—a traditional medieval culture that produced pro-papal as well as proto-protestant texts; a 'Reformation' comprised of multiple reformations and counter-reformation;⁸ and the openness of, as well as limits imposed by, the act of ascribing an early modern book to a medieval author.

'THIS IS A CANTERBURY TALE'

In 1542, some minor and previously unnoticed changes were made to the Thynne–Godfray edition of Chaucer's *Workes* of 1532. The book was reprinted in two variant editions in 1542 by the draper Richard Grafton for the bookseller William Bonham and stationer John Reynes.⁹ Grafton does not leave his name on the book: he was simply producing it on Bonham and Reynes's behalf. His career is nevertheless useful as context for this book's production, over which, as printer, he obviously had some measure of control. He later became an important writer and publisher of chronicle history, but around this time he was a man close to the Henrician court and to the fractious business of the reformation. He worked directly for both Thomas Cranmer and Thomas Cromwell, was involved in the production of the Matthew or Coverdale Bible of 1537 and then the Paris-based publication of Henry's Great Bible in 1539. He was imprisoned twice in 1541, the year of the fall of his patron Cromwell, for printing unlawful material and for breaches of new, conservative religious policy. He was caught up by controversy again in 1543, when he was arrested for importing and distributing outlawed

⁷ In 'Praise of Peace', Gower hopes that Christian princes will end the schism and '[s]ette ek the rightful Pope uppon his stalle' (*The English Works of John Gower*, I. 383).

⁸ See Haigh, *English Reformations*. My use of lower case for the 'Reformation' signals my sense that there was no single English reformation (or 'Protestantism' at this time).

⁹ STC 5069 and 5070: for contents, see the description of Godfray's 1532 edition in Ch. 3; IMEV 3448, *The Plowman's Tale*, is added (see below). Reynes and Bonham are named on the title-page of one variant edition each: Reynes's initials are cut into some capitals in the books. See Duff, *A Century of the English Book Trade*, 15–16 and 135–6, on the careers of these men, which seem to have been marked by less controversy than Grafton's.

books, although in the same year he was back in favour, granted a privilege with Edward Whitchurch for the printing of a mass and other service books including primers.¹⁰ He was later appointed royal printer to Edward VI.¹¹ Grafton's commitment to Cromwellian reform and his experiences during the Henrician reformation may inform a previously unnoticed addition to fol. 101r of his version of *The Parson's Tale* in 1542. A note has been added in a smaller fount to the left margin of the page (perhaps at the direction of Bonham and Reynes): 'This is a Canterbury tale' (see Fig. 31).¹²

In 1542, there were a good many reasons to draw attention to a prose treatise, which, as I argue in Chapter 1, had an already slightly uncertain relationship to the framework of *The Canterbury Tales*. The tale told by the Parson concerns the sacrament of penance and its three conditions as they were defined by the Lateran Council of 1215: contrition, auricular confession, and satisfaction. The note in Grafton's book is added where the Parson describes the part of the priest in administering the sacraments: '[c]ommune penaunce is that preestes enjoynen men comunly in certeyn caas, as for to goon peraventure naked in pilgrimages, or barefoot' (*The Canterbury Tales*, x. 104). What the 'preestes' must 'enjoyen'—the thanksgiving of devout travellers to saints' relics and effigies at shrines, including that of Thomas Becket at Canterbury; donation; belief in the intercession of saints in bodily and spiritual health; the search for sacredness outside of one's immediate locality and daily existence—made pilgrimage popular. Pilgrimage was something that the laity could see, feel, and do to express their faith.¹³ However, the vital and rather material existence of the practice made it an obvious target for reform. It was singled out as an abuse within the Wycliffite tradition.¹⁴ The Lollard sympathizer William Thorpe attacked pilgrims in his fifteenth-century trial:

¹⁰ Neville-Sington, 'Press, Politics and Religion', 593–602.

¹¹ Grant Ferguson, 'Grafton, Richard (c.1511–1573)'.

¹² I have yet to survey all copies of each edition but I have yet to find a copy without this marginal note. Another appears on fol. 105v, 'This is a cauntorburye tale', next to the Parson's account of the remission of sin by good works and the administration of the sacraments and not by faith alone (the latter a 'protestant trade-mark', Cummings, *The Literary Culture of the Reformation*, 222).

¹³ Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, 190–200.

¹⁴ Hudson, *Lollards and Their Books*, 126: 'pilgrimages and images are probably the two topics on which most frequently unorthodox positions were expressed by Lollard suspects'; cf. Bernard's account of just a 'few sceptics' in the Middle Ages ('Vitality and Vulnerability in the Late Medieval Church', 230).

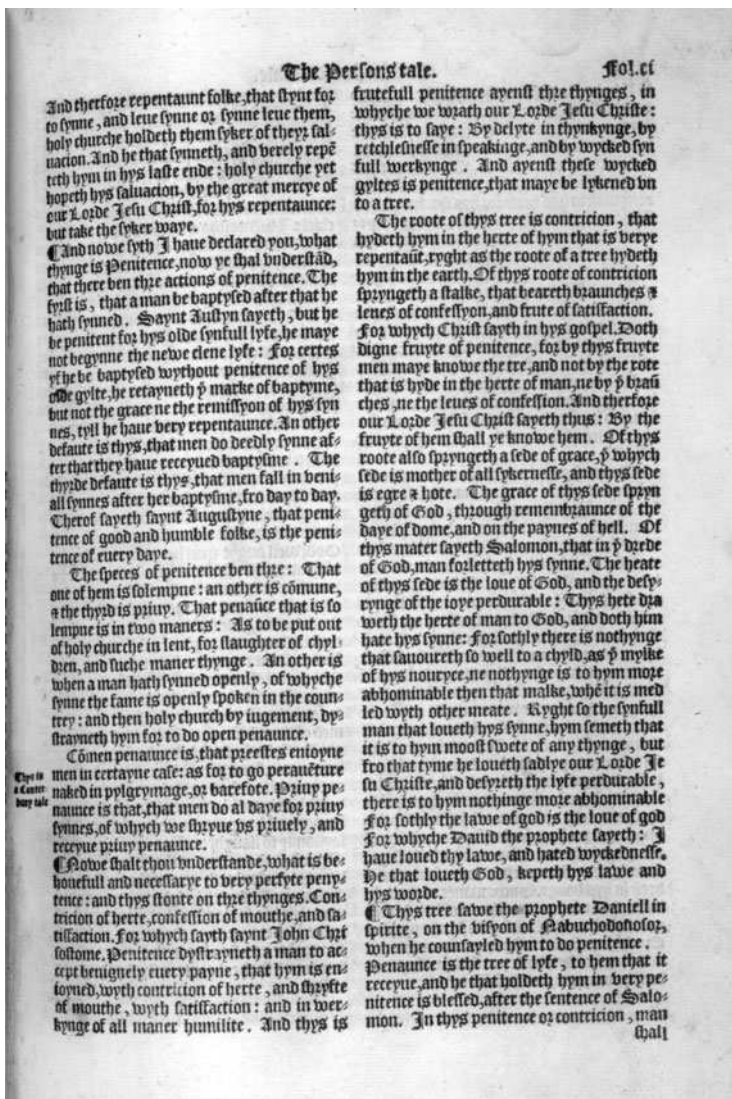


Figure 31. San Marino, Calif., Huntington Library, 99596: *The Workes of Geffray Chaucer* (printed by Richard Grafton for William Bonham, 1542), STC 5069, fol. 101r. Reproduced by permission of The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

þe cause whi þat manye men and wymmen now gon hidir and þidir on pilgrymage, it is more for þe helpe of her bodies þan for þe helpe of her soulis ... And if þese men and wymmen ben a moneþe oute in her pilgrymage, manye of hem an half æere aftir schulen be greeete iangelers, tale tellers and lyeris.¹⁵

The Tudor laity were as inclined as their predecessors to set about wandering, and to be attacked for it. Erasmus went on a pilgrimage to Canterbury in 1512–14 and then wrote against the worship of ignorant and selfish pilgrim-tourists at Becket's shrine in his *Colloquies*, published 1526.¹⁶ Pilgrimage was included among the *mala dogma* of the Catholic Church from soon after the 1534 Act of Supremacy. Cromwell's 1536 injunctions upon the Ten Articles of the Faith (which do not themselves deal with pilgrimage) state that priests should not 'allure the people by any enticements to the pilgrimages of any saint'. Further Injunctions in 1538 were even more explicit: 'That ye shall make, or cause to be made, in the said church ... one sermon every quarter of the year at the least, wherein ye shall purely and sincerely ... exhort your hearers ... not to repose their trust or affiance in any other works devised by men's fantasies beside scripture: as in wandering to pilgrimages.'¹⁷ The Henrician counter-reformation that began before and intensified after Cromwell's fall resulted in the reversal of much evangelical policy, but no positive step was taken to reconstruct dismantled shrines or clear the new obstacles that had been laid in the path of Tudor pilgrims.¹⁸

In 1542, the reform-minded printer Grafton and those who paid him to print Chaucer's texts were faced with a problem. Just what could be done with a fictional text, tacked perilously on to the end of an apparently incomplete collection of tales, beginning with a favourable account of that unreformed and noisome practice, pilgrimage? A text might be described as a 'Canterbury tale' instead of (or as well as) Chaucer's, a statement which, by 1542, appears to have had a very specific meaning for reformers. The preface to a 1549 John Day Bible is among many sermons and treatises of the period that exhort idle readers to 'spare an houre or. ii. in a day, from theyr worldly busines, employing it about

¹⁵ Hudson (ed.), *Two Wycliffite Texts, The Testimony of William Thorpe 1407*, II. 1288–331.

¹⁶ Bernard, 'Vitality and Vulnerability in the Late Medieval Church' (199–205, 210–24 on the popularity of pilgrimage in the period, 224 on Erasmus).

¹⁷ Burnet, *The History of the Reformation of the Church of England*, iv. 309 (no. vii), 343 (no. xi).

¹⁸ On Henry's counter-reformation, 1538–47, see Haigh, *English Reformations*, ch. 9.

the reading of this boke, as they haue bene vsed to do in Cronicles & Canterbury tales'. In a sermon of the same year, Cranmer asks why, if people believe the Gospel to be true, they do not live according to it; and '[i]f we take it for a Canterbury tale, why do we not refuse it? Why do we not laugh at it out of place, and whistle at it?'¹⁹ The term 'Caunterbury tale' had taken on some of the semantic range of the term 'tale' itself:²⁰ in 1540s England it could point to fictions that were worthless, even perilous, distractions from the serious business of pious life.

Amid the serious business of the English reformations, however, describing a text as a tale, a diversion, might prove a useful thing to do. So much is suggested, or hinted at, by Foxe's 1570 *Actes and monuments*, which says that at the time of the publication of Thynne's edition, 'the Bishoppes condemnyng and abolishyng al maner of Englishe bookes and treatises, which might bryng the people to any light of knowledge, did yet authorise the woorkes of Chaucer to remayne still & to be occupied' (DDd4r). In 1598, Thynne's son Francis appears to have followed Foxe in some *Animadversions* he wrote upon Thomas Speght's new edition of the 1532 Chaucer:

[I]n one open parlamente ... when talke was had of Bookes to be forbidden, Chaucer had there for euer byn condemned, had yt not byn that his woorkes had byn counted but fables.²¹

Thynne may have had other sources for his claim: the herald and antiquary was an indefatigable collector of archival material and he probably had access to a copy of the *Statutes* printed by Berthelet in June 1543, within a year or so of the issue of Grafton's 1542 Chaucer.²² The 1543 *Statutes* included 'An act for the aduancement of true religion' (A2r), containing an often-cited example of the early modern censorship of books. In the 1543 act, Tyndale's translation of the Bible is banned;

¹⁹ STC 2077, 2A6r, and Spurgeon, *Five Hundred Years of Chaucer Criticism and Allusion, 1357–1900*, i. 88–9.

²⁰ MED, s.v. 'tale' for a range of meanings including an 'unsubstantiated story', 'fiction, fable' (after c.1350).

²¹ Furnivall (ed.), *Chaucer: Animadversions ... Sett Downe by Francis Thynne*, 10. The text was presented in manuscript, Huntington EL 34. B. 11.

²² See Carlson, 'The Writings and Manuscript Collections of the Elizabethan Alchemist, Antiquary, and Herald Francis Thynne'. Among the collections for his *Animadversions* was a copy of the 1598 Speght Chaucer, STC 5077, heavily annotated, and still extant: Houghton Eng. 1221. The first edition of the *Statutes* [34 & 35 Hen. VIII, 22 Jan.–12 May 1543] is STC 9406.7; I cite from STC 9407. On the presentation of the 'Act for the aduancement of true religion' to the Lords on 8 May 1543, see Haigh, *English Reformations*, 161.

all books contrary to the established, published, sanctioned doctrine (post-1540) are banned; unsanctioned preambles and annotations are banned; printers who print and booksellers who sell banned books will be imprisoned; reading by women (excepting the noble and gentle), craftsmen, journeymen, apprentices, and any other of low degree is banned (A2v–4r). All people may peruse books in the houses of their fathers and lords and masters, if they do so ‘quietly’ (A4r), and if they restrict themselves to post-1540 Henrician ‘doctrine’ and whatever in the way of pre-1540 material has been legitimately left upon the household shelves: psalters, primers, prayers, and, as Foxe and Thynne note, a little light reading—‘cronicles, Canterbury tales, Chaucers bookes, Gowers bookes, and stories of menues lyues’ (A3r).

The 1543 Act was the culmination of a succession of bishops’ injunctions, similar acts, royal proclamations, and carefully allocated letters patent that aimed to control the effects of polemical and controversial material printed, imported, and widely disseminated in 1520s and 1530s England.²³ ‘Chaucer’ fulfils his promise in this sense: he and another fatherly, masterly, medieval author, Gower, are employed to describe the licit, ensure that some texts may be ‘dispersed to many ... opened to all’ and others might not be. But the promise of fiction is rather different in Grafton’s 1542 edition of Chaucer’s *Workes*. If The Parson’s Tale is there ‘a Canterbury tale’ because it is a marginal trifle—then what are the ‘Canterbury tales’ described by statute the very next year? Unless they are made to map on to the next category in the act, ‘Chaucers bookes’, then they are something very risky indeed—an opportunity for every Parson’s Tale, every treatise advocating some outlawed practice, to be sanctioned by a well-situated excuse: ‘this old thing? this is just a Canterbury tale’. Conversely, unless ‘Canterbury tales’ can be *distinguished* from ‘Chaucers bookes’, the author affords neither book producer nor book nor reader the defence that fiction always offers: the defence that a tale is *deliberately* untrue. If it is to be ‘stayed’ (as Bale would hope) The Parson’s Tale must, in the 1542–3 scheme of things, be one of ‘Chaucers bookes’ and ‘a Canterbury tale’. This is because (to return to Foxe) England’s great

²³ See Loades, *Politics, Censorship and the English Reformation*, 96–108; Reed, ‘The Regulation of the Book Trade Before the Proclamation of 1538’; Neville-Sington, ‘Press, Politics and Religion’, 588; and on the relationship of censorship to the growing monopoly of the Stationers’ Company over book production, Christianson, ‘The Rise of London’s Book Trade’, 145–7, including discussion of the 1534 Act forbidding the foreign involvement in the trade licensed by Richard III’s legislation of 1484 (on which see Ch. 2).

medieval author 'saw ... as much almost, as euen we do now', except that he sometimes saw something less, something 'we' would rather not see (the value of pilgrimage for instance). In such a case he was not the author himself, but instead, a writer of Canterbury tales—a Parson or Wife of Bath. That is to say, he was what his *Tales* always enabled him to be, a jangler and a liar, an elaborate, impersonated fiction, and thus not Chaucer at all.

PILGRIMS' TALES, 1532–1550

Many scholars—James Simpson, Alice Miskimin, Felix Swart, and Kevin Pask among them—have argued that as they printed his own works and ascribed anticlerical works to him, reformation printers 'insistently Lollardized Chaucer'.²⁴ On the one hand Grafton is simply one of the most insistent. His marginal addition to The Parson's Tale obliterates residual and varied meanings for Chaucer's medieval and Catholic text in order to create a singular idea of Chaucer's protestant text. On the other hand, his marginal note reminds us that an ascription may have unquiet causes and disquieting effects. I have just suggested that to call a text a 'Canterbury tale' in 1542 is to give it a label that points a reader, even a censor, in multiple, rather contradictory directions. This is a useful way to reconsider what scholars have described as the reformers' Chaucer. Consider one of the more detailed scholarly accounts of the editions of Chaucer produced in the 1530s and 1540s, that of John N. King:

Under the Cromwell administration, reformers first eluded censorship by disguising the virulently anti-clerical *Plowman's Tale* (c.1535) as a gathering of a legitimate Chaucer edition ... during the middle 1530s. Publication of the piece in the 1542 Thynne edition took place only by means of royal protection and an act of Parliament declaring that Chaucer's 'woorkes had byn counted but fables'.... John Leland confused *The Plowman's Tale* with *Piers Plowman* ... [and described] Chaucer as a reformist theologian and disciple of Wyclif ... [*Jack Upland*] appeared disguised as a gathering 'compiled by the famous Geoffrey Chaucer' (c.1536). ... *The Pilgrim's Tale*, yet another crude Chaucerian imitation, appeared under Cromwell in *The Court of Venus* (c.1536).²⁵

²⁴ Simpson, *Reform and Cultural Revolution*, 40–2; Miskimin, *The Renaissance Chaucer*, 255–7; Swart, 'Chaucer and the English Reformation'; Pask, *The Emergence of the English Author*, 14–29 (quotation 24).

²⁵ King, *English Reformation Literature*, 51–2.

In King's account, Chaucer and his pilgrims' tales are somewhat bafflingly rather than insistently 'Lollardized'. The author is involved in a kind of 'confused' subterfuge, protected from, but not independent of, the urgently but also chaotically repressive effects of the English reformation.

It is worth reconsidering, along these lines, some of the evidence that lies behind accounts such as King's. The 1532 Thynne edition is sometimes described as a reformist or at least 'anti-papal' book. In fact it contains nothing more controversial than Chaucerian anti-clerical satire alongside some orthodox Catholic (and as I suggest above pro-papal) material—Lydgate's 'Balade in Commendation of Our Lady', the Virgin Mary, for instance, not ascribed to the Bury monk but included (by inference) among Chaucer's works.²⁶ There is, however, evidence that Chaucer was closely associated with the Lollard analogues for reformist polemic as early as the 1530s. The first edition of a Lollard text ascribed to him—on an elaborate title page—was the 1536? edition of *Jack Upland* printed by John Nicholson for John Gough (and reprinted by Foxe in the 1570 *Actes and monuments* as proof of Chaucer's Lollardy).²⁷ The text is a dialogue upon and diatribe against mendicancy in which, as Anne Hudson has noted, the only really controversial question on the Eucharist has been omitted by the reformation editor.²⁸ The ascription to a 'famous' Chaucer on A1r was most likely added to remove further any imputation of radicalism (see Fig. 32). It is as John Gough explains in the beginning of a Lollard text on Bible translation that he published in 1540, *The dore of holy scripture*: 'blame not me though I haue folowed myne orygyne and olde copy ... I wrote it not blamyng no person nowe lyuyng.'²⁹ Better that one's source was 'not ... lyuing' because the copy was 'olde' than not living because he had, like that notorious translator of the Bible, William Tyndale, been burned for his views.

The 1536? *Jack Upland* was not, however, a text 'disguised as a gathering' of Chaucer's *Workes* as King suggests. It is an octavo, much smaller than the size of the 1532 edition. It bears no resemblance to the sorts of texts contained within that volume. It cannot be readily accommodated by the taxonomy for Chaucerian books suggested by

²⁶ See my account of the book's contents in Ch. 3; Simpson describes the book as anti-papal, *Reform and Cultural Revolution*, ii. 41.

²⁷ *STC* 5098; *IMEV* 3782.5 (in fact prose); in Foxe, *STC* 11223, G3r–5r. See Heyworth, 'The Earliest Black-Letter Editions of *Jack Upland*' and (ed.), *Jack Upland, Friar Daw's Reply, and Upland's Rejoinder*.

²⁸ Hudson, *Lollards and Their Books*, 239–40.

²⁹ *STC* 25587.5, A7r.

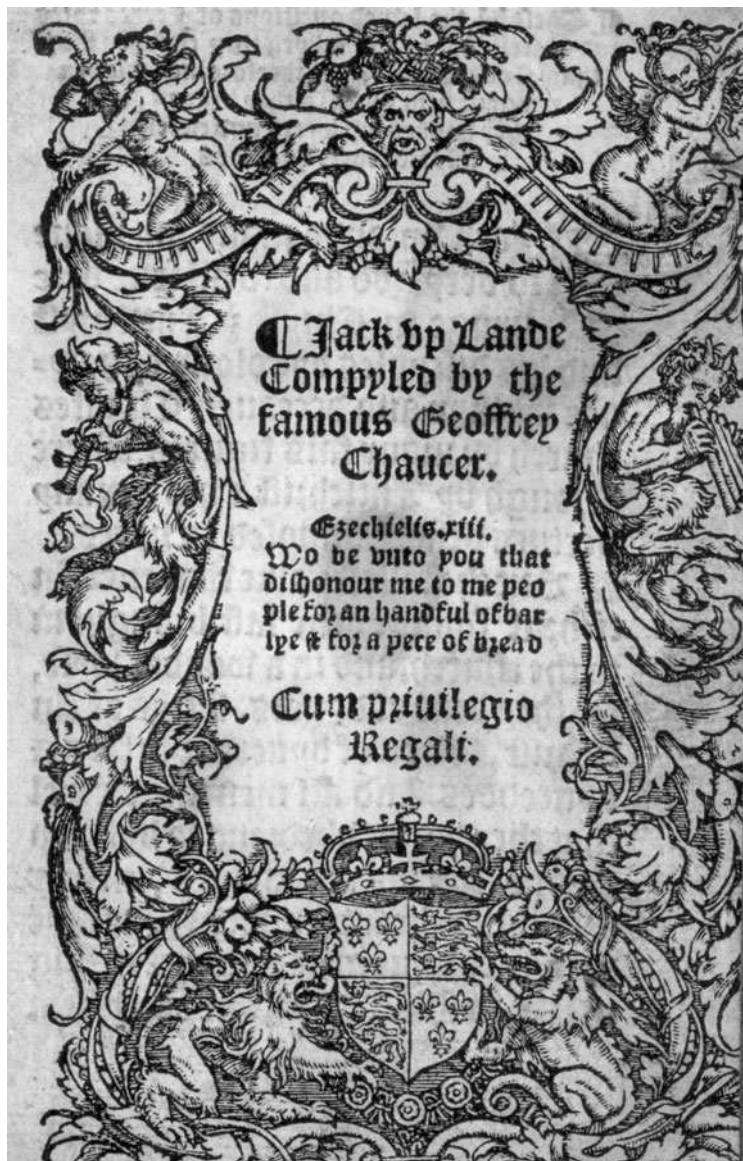


Figure 32. San Marino, Calif., Huntington Library, 51789: *Jack Upland* (printed by John Nicholson, 1536?), STC 5098, A1r. Reproduced by permission of The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

the 1543 Act; and neither Bale nor Leland could find room for it in their bibliographies for the poet.³⁰ *The Plowman's Tale* is a different story, one more securely linked to Chaucer on the one hand, and just as diffuse and ambiguous on the other. It is a story that Foxe starts to tell in the 1570 *Actes and monuments*:

[W]hat tale can bee more playnely tolde, then the talke of the ploughman ... and therfore no great maruell, if that narration was exempted out of the copies of Chaucers workes. (DDd4r–4v)

Andrew Wawn has argued persuasively from linguistic evidence that the text, a c.1400 dialogue between a Griffon (arguing for the pope) and Pelican (on the side of Christ) was made to look like 'a Canterbury tale' in the sixteenth century. A Renaissance editor added a prologue to an old text that assigns it to a Plowman, newly arrived on the Canterbury road, enjoined by Harry Bailly to contribute a tale to the pilgrims' contest.³¹

The link between Chaucer and *The Plowman's Tale* is therefore generic—a pilgrim whose tale was untold when Chaucer died is allocated a text³²—but it may not depend upon the medieval author's name. The first edition of *The Plowman's Tale* is missing its title-page. It had been printed by Thomas Godfray before or in 1533, within a year of the first edition of Chaucer's *Workes*.³³ However, like the 1536? *Jack Upland*, it is too small to have been designed as a gathering of that edition, which is on large folio paper, whereas *The Plowman's Tale* is a small folio. The books may nevertheless have been meant to be linked in some way. Francis Thynne's garbled claim in his 1598 *Animaduersiones* that Cardinal Wolsey prevented Thynne from including in his 1532 edition *The Pilgrim's Tale*, a text penned after 1536, might make sense if he mistook the Plowman for the Pilgrim, and if William Thynne had been at work on the 1532 edition for some time before it was published

³⁰ Leland does not include it; Bale lists the work under Wyclif in his notebook, and writes 'Hoc opus a quibusdam Galfrido Chaucero, sed sinistre tribuitur [this work is ascribed to Geoffrey Chaucer by some, but misleadingly]' (*Index Britanniae Scriptorum*, 274). He does not include the work in his entry for Chaucer in the 1548 *Summarium* (he writes after the list there, '[d]e ceteris nihil accepi [of the rest, none are accepted at all]', *STC* 1295, 3D2v) or the 1557 *Catalogus*.

³¹ Wawn, 'The Genesis of the *Plowman's Tale*'.

³² This was not the first apocryphal tale to be ascribed to the Plowman. On the Marian devotional text tacked onto *The Canterbury Tales* in Oxford, Christ Church, 152, see Hammond, *Chaucer*, 444–6.

³³ *STC* 5099.5; *IMEV* 3448. The *STC* date there of c.1535 is adjusted by the discovery of record of the sale of the text in 1533 by Rhinelander McCarl (ed.), *The Plowman's Tale*, 45.

(Wolsey was dead by 1532).³⁴ Alternatively, Francis Thynne may have developed his theories about bishops and censorship from Foxe's stories of suppressed pilgrims' tales or perhaps from John Leland's manuscript accounts of Chaucer in his *Scriptores*.³⁵ In his biobibliography for Chaucer, Leland comments that '*Petris Aratoris fabula, quae communi doctorum consensu Chaucero, tanquam vero parenti, attribuitur, in utraque editione, quia malos sacerdotum mores vehementer increpavit, suppressa est* [The Tale of Piers Plowman, which by the common consent of the learned is attributed to Chaucer as its true author has been suppressed in each edition, because it vigorously inveighed against the bad morals of the priests]'.³⁶

Leland's tale is little clearer than Francis Thynne's. It was apparently produced before the 1542 edition of *The Workes* that includes *The Plowman's Tale* (Leland uses a 1532 edition of Chaucer to list his works), and Leland thinks of Langland's Plowman, Piers, not the unnamed pseudo-Chaucerian Plowman, as he writes up his bibliography. However, his account of the discussion of the 'learned' about the matter in the 1530s is interesting given further evidence of early sixteenth-century circulation of *The Plowman's Tale*. The only extant manuscript of this text is in what seems to me to be a late medieval document hand, bound into a copy of the 1532 *Workes* in the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas in Austin. Whoever commissioned or copied it replicated the column width and depth, the position of running titles, and the size of the rubric in Thynne's edition. This *Plowman's Tale* was evidently transcribed after 1532, and the scribe had a copy of *The Workes* in front of him.

He did not, however, use one of the later printed versions as copy-text. The manuscript is closely related to the separate, c.1533 Godfrey edition, but there is evidence that some other version lies behind it. The manuscript has many independent readings, several of which improve

³⁴ 'This tale, when kinge henrye the eighte had redde, he called my father unto hym, sayinge, "Williame Thynne! I dobt this will not be allowed; for I suspecte the Byshoppes will call the in questione for yt."... [T]he kinge bydd him goo his waye, and feare not. All whiche not withstandinge, my father was called in questione by the Byshoppes, and heaved at by cardinall Wolseye, his olde enymye', Furnivall (ed.), *Chaucer. Animaduersiones... Sett Downe by Francis Thynne*, 9–10. See the useful discussion by Dane, 'Bibliographical History versus Bibliographical Evidence'.

³⁵ Thynne probably had access to Leland's notes; on their circulation in the hands of John Stow and others, see Harris, 'John Stow and the Antiquarian Network', 28 n. 12.

³⁶ Bodl. Top. Gen. C. 4, fol. 160r; cited here from Hammond, *Chaucer*, 5, and Lounsbury, *Studies in Chaucer*, i. 133–42.

sense or metre. It contains both Latin rubric to match that found in texts such as The Parson's Tale in editions of *The Workes* and unique old French headings such as 'le Gryffon perla' which do not appear in any printed version of the text. Perhaps most tellingly, the word 'Plowmanys' in the enlarged script used by the scribe for rubrication has been misplaced alongside the third and fourth lines of text at the top of the right column, fol. 5v.³⁷ The word looks to me to have been miscopied from a running header positioned close to the top line of the text in an exemplar. No such arrangement for the text exists in an early printed edition that survives. If, as this suggests, *The Plowman's Tale* had an independent life in some lost edition or one or more manuscripts, then it might have attracted the sort of attention—and the sort of efforts to ascribe it to Chaucer—described by Leland.

However, it was not until 1542 that *The Plowman's Tale* can be shown to have become, in any definitive way, 'a Canterbury tale' by Chaucer. In that year, at the same time that he was annotating the tale of the Parson, Grafton added the text to his new edition of *The Workes*.³⁸ Grafton's arrangement does not, however, secure the text for the Chaucer canon. It marks it out as differently Chaucerian and in doing so suggests some of the problems as well as protestant solutions that the medieval past presented to a reformed present. Placed after The Parson's Tale, the Plowman's contribution to the Canterbury contest does not complete the Canterbury narrative but returns the pilgrims to the very midst of their journey to Canterbury. The disarrangement of the *Tales* in this way seems to have had an impact on the reception of *The Plowman's Tale*, which was somehow not quite *of* Chaucer's *Workes*, at least not in the same way that other texts contained by that book were. In 1548, for instance, impelled perhaps by Protector Somerset's repeal of those Henrician and earlier laws censoring book production, another reform-minded printer, William Hill, lifted the text in its entirety out of *The Workes*. He printed it in a quarto format not seen for one of Chaucer's texts since

³⁷ The book is Q PR 1850 1532. The differences of text and layout are noted and described by Irvine, 'A Manuscript Copy of "The Plowman's Tale"' (56 for a summary of evidence that this is an independent witness).

³⁸ I am not inclined to think that William Thynne was involved in the production of this edition or this tale (though his involvement might account for his son's stories of censorship—if he confused Wolsey with Cranmer, for instance). Costomiris comments sensibly on the matter in 'The Influence of Printed Editions and Manuscripts on the Canon of William Thynne's *Canterbury Tales*'.

1532.³⁹ He ascribed it to 'Chaucer knyght' and added the incongruous explicit, 'Thus endeth the boke of Chaunterbury Tales' (A1r, D8r). *The Plowman's Tale* did not, moreover, become more securely Chaucerian in the new conditions for book production when Thynne's edition of *The Workes* was again reprinted, this time by Nicholas Hill working on behalf of a group of booksellers in about 1550.⁴⁰ Copies of *The Plowman's Tale* are in this book snugly contained by Chaucer's pilgrimage, before rather than after *The Parson's Tale*. However, it is perhaps to go too far to argue from this that 'Chaucer had, then, been rendered thoroughly Protestant by 1550'.⁴¹ The Parson has the last, wholly Catholic word in this book. His call to pilgrimage is both intact and unremarked in Hill's edition, as are his, and Lydgate's and Gower's, various allusions to the papacy, to Marian intercession, to the doctrine of justification by good works, and to all the other trappings and traditions of unreformed religion found amid the gathered texts of this old poet. In c.1550, which tale—the Parson's or the Plowman's—'knytte[s] up' the Canterbury competition remains a matter for the reader to decide (*The Canterbury Tales*, x. 28).

Whoever penned the last of the works mentioned by King, *The Pilgrim's Tale*, was alert to the possibilities offered by a seemingly reform-minded Chaucer whose works were none the less evidence of the not-too-distant, unreformed past. *The Pilgrim's Tale* was printed anonymously in a miscellany entitled *The court of Venus* by Thomas Gibson in about 1538.⁴² It has attracted few commentators, but its first, Francis Thynne, ascribed it to Chaucer and discussion has focused on its apocryphal status in the Chaucer canon ever since.⁴³ The text seems to be a reworking of some fifteenth-century Lollard material in response to the 1536–7

³⁹ STC 5100, IMEV 3448. Hill's collaborative production of reformist tracts with Thomas Raynald is described in STC iii. 142. For recent comment on Edwardian repeal of censorship laws but continuing suppression of Catholic works, see Cummings, *The Literary Culture of the Reformation*, 233–4.

⁴⁰ STC 5071–4, published respectively for William Bonham, Richard Kele, Thomas Petyt, Robert Toye; despite the new order for the *Tales*, the contents are identical to those of the Grafton edition. On the imprisonment of some of these men with Grafton in 1543, see Gillespie, 'Petyt, Thomas (b. in or before 1494, d. 1565/6)'. For evidence of Hill's protestant interests, see Driver, 'A False Imprint in Chaucer's Works'.

⁴¹ Simpson, *Reform and Cultural Revolution*, ii. 41.

⁴² STC 24650; it appears that *The Pilgrim's Tale* was omitted from the next surviving edition of 1563?. Contents of both books are given in Fraser (ed.), *The Court of Venus*. On Gibson as a reformist author and book producer, see Gadd, 'Gibson, Thomas (d. 1562)'.

⁴³ Furnivall (ed.), *Chaucer: Animaduersions ... Sett Downe by Francis Thynne*, 7–8.

northern rebellions, especially the Pilgrimage of Grace.⁴⁴ Those in the north who opposed (among other things) Cromwell and Henry's reforms had assigned their movement the title 'pilgrimage' to invoke that against which they protested: the destruction of a way of life and set of lay religious practices that included pilgrimage. The eponymous pilgrim-author of the tale initially seems to support their cause. He has been set to the Parson's common penance: he makes his way to the famous Shrine of Our Lady at Walsingham. On the way, however, he wanders into a spiritual and ideological wilderness, or more specifically into the grounds of the Gilbertine monastery of Sempringham in Lincolnshire, a locus for protest in 1536 (as was Walsingham in 1537), and a place of temptation for the narrator. He finds that he is drawn by the wayward glances of a monk towards the house, where he knows, for he has heard about this mixed order, women are 'closyd vp' (l. 163).⁴⁵ At just this perilous moment the narrator is rescued by a virulently anti-fraternal diatribe delivered by a 'comely pryst', a different sort of 'perrygryne', a wandering, Lollard-style preacher (ll. 170, 188). At the same moment, the idea of pilgrimage is rescued from the perilous redefinition of the practice in 1536 as a ground of and form for political rebellion. In this text, pilgrims are those who need and can be brought by true pilgrims to a new path. We know that the author of *The Pilgrim's Tale* had a copy of Thynne's *Workes* as he wrote. He tells us to turn to the *Romaunt of the Rose* by page and leaf as he cites Chaucer's translation of some of the most anti-fraternal material in that text.⁴⁶ He makes use of Chaucer's portrait of the monk and the mocking account of fairy-chasing friars from *The Wife of Bath's Tale*. In this sense what is Chaucerian about this text is proto-protestant, or at least anti-clerical. But his description of the reformist priest also owes something to Chaucer's of the goodly Parson (both practice what they teach, l. 263, and *Canterbury Tales*, l. 497).

⁴⁴ My work with Anne Hudson on the Lollard sources for the text (for a new edition) is forthcoming. The link to the Pilgrimage of Grace is established when the priest describes 'of lat owr cobbler the dawē' (l. 448), Captain Cobbler of the 1536 rebellion, Nicholas Melton. See Bush, *The Pilgrimage of Grace*, 10 (the impact of literary traditions), 21 (Melton); Hoyle, *The Pilgrimage of Grace and the Politics of the 1530s*, 46–50 (the place of the monasteries in northern culture), 104–6 (Melton); and Shagan, *Popular Politics and the English Reformation*, 89–128.

⁴⁵ On the order, see Golding, *Gilbert of Sempringham and the Gilbertine Order, c.1130–c.1300*.

⁴⁶ The passage cited, ll. 722–4, is a version of Fals-Semblant's account of the friars' Gospel of the Holy Ghost, *Romaunt*, ll. 7165–70, here (mis)read as an anti-papal sentiment of Chaucer's.

And it is the pilgrim himself, rather than a tradition of anticlericalism, that makes it possible to recognize in the poem a 'Canterbury tale'. After 1536, pilgrims were not harbingers of reform: they were in urgent need of reform.

In this way *The Pilgrim's Tale* foregrounds something curiously absent from critical and bibliographical histories of the reformers' Chaucer. To say that 'this tale is a Canterbury tale', as does the 1542 *Workes*, is very specifically to say that it is a tale told by a pilgrim, on his or her way to pay homage to St Thomas, against whom Henry railed in a proclamation of 1538:

Thomas Becket, sometime archbishop of Canturburie, stubbornly [withstood] the wholesome laws established against the enormities of the clergy ... his name shall not be observed; nor the service ... and prayers in his name read, but razed and put out of all the books ... to the intent his grace's loving subjects shall be no longer blindly led, and abused, to commit idolatry, as they have done in times past.⁴⁷

Following the 1536 Pilgrimage of Grace, this proclamation, and others of the same year ordering the stripping of less famous local shrines, and Cromwellian injunctions, pilgrimages, especially pilgrimages to Canterbury, were not merely to be preached against but to be blotted, razed, obliterated from the copybook of history.⁴⁸ But pilgrimage could not be easily cancelled from the pages of Chaucer's books. On the one hand, the destruction of Becket's shrine epitomizes the violence of the English reform movement and its debilitating redefinition of the culture of the Middle Ages. On the other hand, it is a moment at which the statement 'this is a Canterbury tale' ceases to impose a limit upon the meaning of Chaucer's text, and instead suggests the openness of that text to the problems and fractures inherent in the revolutionary schemes of the English reformation.

In 1538, Henry VIII wrote a letter to his bishops explaining that his proclamation against Becket was a response to such

hemming and hacking the word of God, and such our Injunctions as we have lately set forth, that almost no man can understand the true meaning ... and also secretly ... certain spreaders of rumours and false tales in corners ... interpretate and wrest our true meaning and intention ... to an untrue sense.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Burnet (ed.), *The History of the Reformation*, vi. 221–2 (no. lxii).

⁴⁸ See Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, 412, 418, and for published images of the saint with his name erased, plates 131–2.

⁴⁹ Burnet (ed.), *The History of the Reformation*, vi. 224 (no. LXIII).

The writs, proclamations, letters, and injunctions issued by the English reformation press and various royal offices were not effecting the smooth transition to royal supremacy that the king and his agents desired. Part of the problem was that not all of those in official positions desired the same thing. In about 1537, for instance, a group of English bishops (among them John Longland, bishop of Lincoln and chancellor of Lichfield, abused by the author of *The Pilgrim's Tale*) produced a letter to the clergy in favour of pilgrimage:

The bodies of saints, and, namely, the relics of holy martyrs, are to be honoured most sincerely, as the members of Christ. The churches builded in their names, deputed to the service of God, be to be gon unto with faithful and good devotion; and not to be contemned: and pilgrimage to places where Almighty God sheweth miracles, may be don.⁵⁰

The same bishops tended to remove any reference to pilgrimage from the injunctions they issued to their dioceses between 1536 and 1538. Nicholas Shaxton, bishop of Salisbury, meantime, took a position more consistent with that of Cromwell in some printed injunctions of 1538:

Ye shall instruct your parochians not to be envious about works invented by their own foolish devotion; as, to go about in idle pilgrimage.⁵¹

However, the problem outlined by Henry's letter exceeds this sort of evidence of inconsistent ecclesiastical and political policy at a time of rapid and controversial change. The king's sense of peril is textual, a consequence of the instability of discourse itself—of tale-telling and word-hacking, of hostile witnesses and widespread rumours, of confused or willful misinterpretations of the royal word out in the public domain.⁵² Such instability, and official anxiety about its consequences, supply a context for Henry's 1543 Act censoring the production and reading of books and make sense of the 1542 marginal note 'this tale is a Canterbury tale'. Indeed they suggest ways in which the Act and note are connected. The timing of Grafton's edition of Chaucer was uncannily good. He or his collaborators chose to print *The Workes* within months of legislation that excluded precisely this book (in its pre-1540 form, at

⁵⁰ From J. Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials* (Oxford, 3 vols. in 6, 1822), I. i. 88, as cited by Bernard, 'Vitality and Vulnerability in the Late Medieval Church', 232–3.

⁵¹ Burnet (ed.), *The History of the Reformation*, v. 213 (no. LIX).

⁵² See Shagan, *Popular Politics and the English Reformation*, on the importance of rumour in the unsettled and unsettling events of the 1530s.

least) from sweeping measures to prohibit reading. Notably, Bonham and Reynes funded Grafton's edition of Robert Fabyan's *New cronycles* in 1542, and 'cronicles' too were exempted from censorship in 1543.⁵³ Even in the midst of counter-reform measures that saw him imprisoned, Grafton was perhaps close enough to the business of reformation to anticipate the way that new policy might affect bookmen (he—or perhaps Bonham or Reynes—may have been aware of the conservative drift of the discussions of Convocation about Bible production early in 1542). Before Cromwell's fall Grafton was even closer to the bookish matters of England's court. In 1538, while in Paris with Miles Coverdale, at work to produce the new English Bible, he sent Cromwell a letter about some of the most recent efforts to license book production:

And the day before this present came there a post named Nycolas, which brought your lordshipes letters to my lord of harfforde [Edmund Bonner, then ambassador to the French court], with thewhich was bounde a certen inhibicion for pryntyng of bookes, and for addyng of these wordes, Cum priuilegio. ... [H]e sent ymedyatlye for Mr. Couerdale and me, readyng thesame thyng vnto vs, in thewhich is expressed, that we shuld adde these wordes (ad imprimendum solum) which wordes we never heard of before. Nether do we take it that those wordes shuld be added in the pryntyng of the scripture ... for then shuld yt be a great occasyon to the enemyes to saye that yt is not the kynges acte or mynde to set yt forth, but only lycence the prynters to sell soche as is put forth.⁵⁴

Cromwell and Henry's 1538 proclamation still causes problems for bibliographers: either he hoped by the new phrase 'ad imprimendum solum' to stop printers and readers taking 'cum priuilegio' as royal licence for a book's content, or he meant to stop piracy by signalling that privileges were for printing sole.⁵⁵ What is significant about it here is that Grafton is unable to comprehend (or just to believe) the official words he is to use to describe the worth and meaning of a book. He detects that these words are ambiguous, liable to render the status of the king's and even God's word ambiguous. The royal proclamation cannot or should not mean what it says, he writes. If he were to follow it, and put the words 'ad imprimendum solum' on to the Bible that he and Coverdale are

⁵³ STC 10661–2 (including verses by Lydgate, described further below).

⁵⁴ Pollard, 'Ad Imprimendum Solum', 61–2.

⁵⁵ See Greg, 'Ad Imprimendum Solum'; Peter W. M. Blayney's view, with which I am inclined to agree, is that Henry meant just what Grafton fears that he means—to distance himself from the production of a vernacular Bible.

making, people could legitimately query the king's intention. Someone holding an English Bible impressed by such words might pretend, or genuinely think, that Henry sanctioned Scripture in the vernacular 'only for printing' and not because the 'kynges ... mynde ... set yt forth'.

If something as straightforward as the term 'ad imprimendum solum' was subject to such 'wresting' then efforts to control the meaning of books he printed in 1542 were well advised. In that year, after Cromwell's fall, shortly after one period of imprisonment and shortly before another, Chaucer's *Workes* perhaps seemed to Grafton or his associates a relatively safe investment. The medieval author mediated the risks of publication. However, the marginal note 'this is a Canterbury tale' also suggests that texts sanctioned could be as unpredictably meaningful as the words of sanction meant to be applied to books. But some degree of instability may in fact have been intentional. Who knows, after all, what the words 'this is a Canterbury tale' precisely mean—or if Chaucer means the words he assigns to the Parson, or if he or Bonham, Reynes, Grafton, or any retailer or reader of this book thought a pilgrimage to Becket's shrine was a worthy or worthless occupation? The very openness of the fictional text affords the book producer or consumer, like the author, his best defence. And the author is, in consequence, a foundation for, but equally a breach in, the wall that English reformers erected between their moment and all the moments just past, a breach through which a literary pilgrimage, the Second Nun's saint's life, and an unreformed tract on penitence such as the Parson's Tale, as well as the Plowman's anti-fraternal dialogue, could slip, and make something quite new out of the reformers' Chaucer.

LYDGATE AND THE REFORMATION

In c.1535, Robert Redman printed an edition of Lydgate's *Serpent of Division*.⁵⁶ Lydgate's text contains some conflated and mangled lines from Chaucer's Monk's Tale, ascribed to the monk's master and in Redman's book picked out by a smaller fount:

With Bodkyns / was Cezar Iulius
Murdred at Rome / of Brutus Crassus

⁵⁶ STC 17027.5, in prose. For a discussion of a fragment of a lost edition of the text by Peter Treveris (probably from the 1520s), see Lydgate, *The Serpent of Division*, 46 (and 66 for a nineteenth-century transcription of the colophon).

When many a region: he had brought full lowe
Lo: who may truste Fortune any throwe.

(C4v)⁵⁷

Paul Strohm has argued for the radicalism of Chaucer's and other texts in the *de casibus* tradition. He points to the 'dise' (*Canterbury Tales*, vii. 3961) of Chaucer's Knight evident in his interruption of the Monk:

In keeping with the best contemporary theory [the Knight] is prepared to view [aristocratic] privilege as earned rather than just inherited ... but *as* privilege it is then invited to naturalize itself and indefinitely abide, securing itself against all that would, operating under the name of 'Fortune', render it insecure.⁵⁸

Chaucer's Monk knows better than this. Fortune may bring any great man, however mighty, to sudden disaster. It is rather Chaucerian of Chaucer to put a safe distance between himself and this dangerously avant-garde textual tradition. The Monk is the measure of the distance: it is he, not Chaucer, who discomforts his superiors. But a monk—or just the unnamed clerkly author of the anonymous version of the text produced by Redman—has a different part to play when Lydgate recasts the tale of Julius Caesar in *The Serpent of Division*. There, the author is a bridge rather than a gap between the text and those of high estate, those who might, perhaps, patronize its writer. Lydgate's *Serpent of Division*, like his *Fall of Princes*, instructs rather than discomforts the knightly class. By such instruction, 'euery man' might 'lifte vp his hertis eye and prudently aduerten þe mutabilite' described in exemplary narratives (65, ll. 23–4). The medieval author addresses a potential readership in order to demonstrate that mutability should be contemplated, but then to advise how it can be prudently avoided (with authorial help). Even Lydgate's acknowledged master Chaucer and his uneasy tales of mischance can be put to good use. The best texts, like the best (or best-advised) men, are not imperilled by worldly change.

The message of Lydgate's *Serpent of Division* was lasting. The work was deemed a suitable companion piece to *The tragedye of Gorboduc* in 1590, a play written and first performed for Elizabeth in 1562 that commented upon some of the problems of her reign—specifically the matter of her marriage—and that became an important basis for new Renaissance definitions of the tragic.⁵⁹ The text used by the printers

⁵⁷ Cf. *The Canterbury Tales*, vii. 2136, 2695–102.

⁵⁸ *Politique*, 91.

⁵⁹ *STC* 17028–9. On Stow as editor, see Gillespie, 'Introduction'; on Gorboduc, see James and Walker, 'The Politics of Gorboduc'.

of *Gorboduc* was that edited by John Stow, who chose *The Serpent* for his first foray into the printed production of medieval texts soon after the accession of Elizabeth in 1559, while he was busy collecting texts for a new and improved edition of Chaucer's *Workes*.⁶⁰ Stow, whose books fall just outside the scope of this study, ascribed *The Serpent of Division* to Lydgate for the first time in print in 1559.⁶¹ In this, in his inclusion of Lydgate's *Siege of Thebes* in the 1561 *Workes*, ascribed and announced on the title page, and in his endeavours to augment Chaucer's own canon, Stow contributed to a trend, traced throughout this study, whereby a more stable definition of the medieval author's 'work' was established in print.⁶² However, it has been a contention of all the preceding chapters that books, ascribed and unasccribed, sometimes fail to conform to trends—to 'preclared' ideas of canon, of print culture, of the author 'effect', of reformation or Renaissance—and do so in ways that deserve attention. More than one 'Lydgate' and a very wide range of Lydgatean texts were available to and made anew by Stow. He was an indefatigable collector and annotator of manuscripts of the monk-poet's writings, which had not all disappeared as a result of printing, reform, or even monastic dissolution.⁶³ His work to compile, from the old books he had or saw, a bibliography for Lydgate for the 1598 edition of Chaucer's *Workes* is evidence that for a growing community of Tudor antiquaries, as well as printers, the medieval author had become a stable place for the remnants—whether old manuscripts or the learned texts in them—of a vanishing medieval past.⁶⁴ It was not only the nostalgic Stow, sympathetic to the old religion (if not nonconformist), who made Lydgate a part of the project to bring old works, even monkish ones, to early modern light. Before him the reformer John Bale had spent some part of the 1540s compiling a list of Lydgate's texts from manuscript and printed sources.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ See Hudson, 'John Stow (1525?–1605)'.

⁶¹ It is 'set forth after the Auctours old copy' and 'made by John Lydgate' (A1r, D6v). The only clearly ascribed manuscript is BL Add. 48031A (Yelverton 35), which Stow used as a basis for his own edition (Kekewich *et al.* (eds.), *The Politics of Fifteenth-Century England*, 130).

⁶² The list of his texts in *The Workes* is STC 5077, 3z6r-v.

⁶³ See Edwards, 'John Stow and Middle English Literature', 114–18.

⁶⁴ Hudson, '*Visio Baleii*'; Ross, 'Dissolution and the Making of the English Literary Canon'.

⁶⁵ For evidence of Bale's work, see *Index Britanniae Scriptorum*, 229–31; on Stow's religion and antiquarianism, Archer, 'The Nostalgia of John Stow', and Collinson, 'John Stow and Nostalgic Antiquarianism'.

James Simpson's argument about the status of Lydgate and the effects of his tentative canonization in the early modern period must also be considered here. The likes of Bale and even Stow curbed even as they recorded the 'energies' of the fifteenth century's most prolific English writer. They restricted the meaning of what he wrote by their own interests—English cultural sovereignty, precedents for humanist enrichment of the language, authorship itself. And they did little to recuperate the early popularity of Lydgate's work in print.⁶⁶ The anonymous *c.*1535 *Serpent of Division* was printed at the edge of a hiatus in the publication of editions identifiably Lydgate's. During the period 1534–53, only the ill-fated *Saint Albon* and a single edition of *Stans Puer ad Mensam* were printed with Lydgate's name attached.⁶⁷ Some poems—*The Complaint of the Black Knight*, his Marian 'Balade'—were issued as they had been incorporated into the body and canon of Chaucer's *Workes*. But other texts printed and reprinted from the moment of Caxton's arrival in England—his *Temple of Glas*, debate poems such as *The Churl and the Bird*, Christian allegories such as *The Court of Sapience*, the devotional pieces marketed alongside the works of England's mystics and the writings of the monks of Syon—none of these survived the turn from traditional literary to polemical publication of the 1530s and 1540s, or the turn away from traditional religion, except as old books copied or printed in another, rapidly receding age.⁶⁸

There was no reason in these decades to impress readers of printed books with the author Lydgate. Indeed there was reason not to print works by a 'dan John, monk' or to occupy presses busy with reform and counter-reform polemic by setting up anonymous editions of this monk's amorous complaints, aphoristic reasoning, and varieties of religious observance. However, the limits that Lydgate proposes for political 'disease'—which was only intensified by the radical change of the 1530s and 1540s—were still desirable. In this period, the Tudor political elite, like Tudor antiquaries, were forced to marshal their resources in contexts more changeful than ever. The 1535 *Serpent of Division* makes sense of a

⁶⁶ Simpson, *Reform and Cultural Revolution*, ch. 2.

⁶⁷ As discussed in the last chapter, *STC* 256 (1534) and *STC* 17030.9 (1534–6?).

⁶⁸ Another reason for the decline in production may have been the archaic language of medieval texts (increasingly a matter for discussion by contemporaries), but the same problem did not keep texts ascribed to Chaucer off the press (Horobin, *The Language of the Chaucer Tradition*, ch. 5). Chaucer's *Workes* and Thomas Berthelet's *Temple of Glas* of 1531 (*STC* 17034) showed a way forward, the careful modernization of archaic language, that was not taken for many previously popular works by Lydgate.

tumultuous time in the way that Richard Morison's *Remedy for Sedition*, probably penned for Cromwell and printed in quarto in 1536, makes sense. There, too, is a quotation from one of Chaucer's *Tales*, a stanza from The Clerk's Tale where sad folk inveigh against the unstable will and the capricious reasoning of the unthinking crowd, 'chaungynge as a fane' as were rebels against Henry in 1536.⁶⁹ The only proper response of rulers is that of Walter or indeed his patient wife Griselda: 'Lordes must be lordes', writes Morison. They must 'aduerten' change, inure themselves to misfortune, overrule 'comuness' unable to govern themselves (B4r).

Lydgate's contributions to an emerging vernacular historiography in fifteenth-century England were similarly useful. His *Verses on the Kings of England* were printed anonymously by Wyer in 1539? and c.1552;⁷⁰ also printed after the break with Rome were versions of Henry VI's *Triumphal Entry into London* (partly paraphrased in prose, as in some manuscripts) and Lydgate's *Soteleties* on the coronation of that king, preserved anonymously in Richard Fabyan's *New cronycles*. This book was first printed by Pynson in 1516 and then by William Rastell in 1533. As I noted above, it also appeared from Grafton's press with Chaucer's *Workes* in 1542.⁷¹ These occasional and historical poems by Lydgate are complex texts; they were written for a divided Lancastrian moment and they must smooth out the fractures they detect in England's polity.⁷² They describe kings who fall but then the kings who reigned thereafter. They describe a 1432 London crowd in the *Entry* who, like the sky after a recently passed storm, are barely over their 'olde grevaunce'—ready to object to the devices that welcome their king, including a Jesse Tree, set up on the other side of a castle that bears other trees that show the 'roote' of the king's '[pe]degree be iuste successioun, | As trewe cronycles trewly determine'.⁷³ The likening of the Lancastrian boy-king's royal lineage to that of Christ by way of these images is quite a claim, but poet and pageant-maker together endeavour to bring an end to people's doubts. The Jesse Tree faces St Paul's,

⁶⁹ Cited here from *STC* 18113.5, B1r (cf. *The Canterbury Tales*, iv. 995–1005). See Simpson, *Reform and Cultural Revolution*, 238–41.

⁷⁰ *STC* 9984.5 and 9983 (printed before this time by Pynson, 1518?; De Worde, 1530, and Wyer, 1532?, *STC* 9983.3–84). All editions contain some stanzas of the version ascribed to Lydgate, *IMEV* 3632. On a fifteenth-century broadside of this text now preserved only in manuscript, see Mooney, Lydgate's "Kings of England" and Another Verse Chronicle of the Kings', 256.

⁷¹ *STC* 106659–62; Lydgate's texts are *IMEV* 3799 and 1929.

⁷² See Strohm, *England's Empty Throne*, ch. 7.

⁷³ *Minor Poems of Lydgate: Part II, Henry VI's Triumphal Entry*, ll. 9–10, 405–6.

Callyd off London the chirche cathederall,
 Which ought off reson the devyse to excuse,
 To alle thoo that wolde ageyn yt ffroune or muse.

(ll. 421–5)

Henry must simply ‘lifte up his hertis eye’ to the cathedral, override any objections and ride on to St Paul’s where he will be greeted by angels heralding his God-given right to govern.

In 1547, those preparing the pageants to herald the reign and entry of a new boy-king into London chose Lydgate’s text, as printed by Grafton (and in earlier editions of Fabyan’s *New cronycles*), as the basis for their celebrations. Sydney Anglo argues that Edward VI’s entry, half-borrowed and mismanaged, was a poor show by a hurried and harried London citizenry. Another perspective is possible: Jennifer Loach describes the care and expense lavished upon the recast pageants and a more careful reading of Lydgate’s poem adds weight to her argument. His text and the devices associated with it map a traditional political and civic landscape, one where young kings cut familiar paths through discord and discontent.⁷⁴ They had been invented for England’s last boy king; they provided a precedent for Edward’s own minority, conveniently remembering the glorious beginning rather than ignominious end of his predecessor Henry VI. The medieval text was old ground worth reworking, a place in which Edward VI’s kingship might take ‘roote’.

The uses of Lydgate’s writing during the Edwardian reign and reformation deserve more attention than they are afforded in this study. It is usually Chaucer, Wyclif, and a newcomer to print, William Langland, who are described as the medieval authors of Edward’s reign. *The vision of Pierce Plowman* was first printed in 1550 by Richard Grafton for the evangelical pamphleteer Robert Crowley. Langland was described as—and his ploughman made to be, in part through the many Henrician and Edwardian texts in which he appears as a character—a reformer in medieval disguise, a visionary who saw as ‘we’ see, an ideal principle for the selection of some aspects of medieval culture amid rejection and destruction of others, as the Edwardian iconoclasts set about their work.⁷⁵ But the medieval trappings for protestant panegyric

⁷⁴ See Parry, ‘On the Continuity of English Court Pageantry’; Loach, *Edward VI*, ch. 4; Anglo, *Spectacle, Pageantry, and Early Tudor Policy*, 281–94: according to the latter the troubling Jesse Tree was not among the devices.

⁷⁵ *The vision* is STC 19906–7a. See Hailey, “‘Geuyng Light to the Reader’”, and Thorne and Urhart, ‘Robert Crowley’s *Piers Plowman*’.

that attended Edward's entry to London suggest that Lydgate had his own clear-sighted way of anticipating change, and anticipating the utility of well-placed and perfectly traditional texts for managing change. Old books as well as new printed ones were of interest to those who governed with and for Edward. The *Sammelband* described in Chapter 1 as having been annotated by Edward's Lord of Misrule, George Ferrers, may in fact have passed between several members of the king's household. It bears a signature that closely resembles the sign manual of Arundel, Henry FitzAlan, Lord Chamberlain of Edward's household until 1550 and the name of one 'John Fawler', perhaps the knight and a groom of Edward's Privy Chamber.⁷⁶ Scogan, whose ascribed 'Moral Balade' is one of the poems in this book, explains the use of medieval texts to those who were meant to entertain, comfort, and educate the king. The medieval poet addresses a young prince: 'Planteth the rote of youthe in suche a wyse | That in vertue your growing be alway.'⁷⁷ A Tudor scribe (signed 'I.F.', perhaps Fowler) adds a poem that contains his own thoughts about the medieval author of such poems, '[w]hose booke though it be old defacd and torne | by space of tyme *which* ruins all thynges'. One should

in no noise scorne [it]
for to the reader it great prouffitt brings
if thou but marke, of what he treates and sings
for oftentimes an old and aged Tree
Brings better fruit then those that younger be.⁷⁸

The medieval writer got it right. He knew about political 'noise', the grievances of an unruly readership, and the place of literary texts amid the business of good governance. He continued to describe such things in ways that made sense to readers after aspects of his own culture were 'defaced and torne'—by time as well as by reform and dissolution. Lydgate is praised within the texts contained in Ferrers's and his fellow courtiers' book (as I argue in Chapter 1), but the medieval author need not be clearly named for the value of his work to be recognized. An 'old and aged Tree', an advisory text rooted in medieval tradition, may weather political and religious change just as well as, perhaps better than, the new polemical products of the Tudor press.

⁷⁶ See Boyle, 'Henry Fitzalan, Twelfth Earl of Arundel'; and Loach, *Edward VI*, 56–7, 140, 153, 156, on Fowler. For the contents of this book, see Ch. 1.

⁷⁷ Skeat (ed.), *Chaucerian and Other Pieces*, 'Moral Balade', ll. 41–2.

⁷⁸ Found on the recto of the last leaf of *The Book of Curtesye*, CUL Inc. 5 J. 1. 1.

LYDGATE'S USURPED 'ROWME' FROM EDWARD VI TO MARY

The Tudor writer William Baldwin has a related, but differently nuanced case to make for Lydgate as an author in the preface to the first printed edition of the advisory text whose composition he oversaw, *The Mirror for Magistrates*. In his 1559 preface, he describes the inception of the project, after an unnamed 'Printer had purposed with hym selfe to printe Lidgates booke of the fall of Princes' and decided to commission an addition to that book:

[D]yuers learned men ... to the numbere of seuen, were throughe a generall assent at an apoynted time and place gathered together to deuysie therupon, I resorted vnto them, bering with me the booke of Bochas, translated by Dan Lidgate, for the better obseruacion of his order: whiche although we lyked well, yet woulde it not cumlily serue, seynge that both Bochas and Lidgate were dead, neyther were there any aluye that meddled with lyke argument, to whom the vnfortunat might make their mone.

To make therfore a state mete for the matter, they al agreed that I shoulde vsurpe Bochas rowme.⁷⁹

The usurped 'rowme' here simultaneously suggests wise advice or conversation, an old piece of writing, and a territory—a room or realm to be occupied or overthrown.⁸⁰ The medieval author defines Baldwin's project in much the same way he defines Lydgate's poem and the printed book made of it by Pynson. He imposes an order on it, a means of navigating and a way of liking it. But he is also dead. He enables his successors to close in on the meaning of a literary 'rowme', but leaves the door wide open for Baldwin 'bering with me the booke'.

In an Epistle that precedes his preface, Baldwin has more stories to tell about books. He says of *The Mirror* that '[t]he wurke was begun, & part of it printed. iiii. yeare agoe, but hyndred by the lord Chauncellor that then was' (Epistle 2, 1–3). It was John Wayland who issued the first edition of *The Mirror* in 1554, appended to a version of *The Fall of Princes*.⁸¹ On the verso of the only surviving copy of the original, 1554

⁷⁹ Campbell (ed.), *The Mirror for Magistrates*, Preface 2, 1–27. The 1559 edition is STC 1247.

⁸⁰ See *MED*, s.v. 'roune', 'roum', 'reaume'.

⁸¹ The 1554 *Mirror* is STC 1246; *The Fall of Princes* is STC 3177.5, IMEV 1168.

title-page of this joint edition of *The Fall* and *The Mirror*, Wayland describes the reasons for his own involvement:

While I attended the quenes hignes plesure in setting fourth an vniforme Primer to be vsed of her Subiectes, for the Printynge wherof it pleased her highness ... to geue me a Priuilege vnder her letters Patentes, I thought it good to employ ... my Printe & seruantes for that purpose prouided, about sum necessary & profitable worke. And because that sundry gentlemen very wel lerned, commended much the workes of Lydgate, cheffely the fall of Prynces, which he drew out of Bochas, whereof none were to be got, after that I knew the Counsayles pleasure & aduice therein, I determined to print it [despite] lacke of certayne copies and authours which I could not get by any meane ... I haue added a continuation of that Argument, concerning the chefe Prynces of thys Iland, penned by the best clearkes in such kinde of matters that be thys day lyuing, not vnworthy to be matched with maister Lydgate. And as I shall be encouraged herein, so wyll I procede to cause other notable woorkes to be penned and translated, whiche I trust shalbe to the weale of the whole cuntrye and to the singular profit of euerye subiecte.⁸²

It may be important that Wayland claims credit for having ‘added’ a text to Lydgate’s, but not for having commissioned those who ‘penned’ it, notwithstanding his intention to bring about lots more penning and translating. It is possible that he was not ‘the Printer’ who first looked to *The Fall* and looked for suitable writers to produce a continuation of it. Baldwin began his career not working for Wayland but for the patented Edwardian printer, Edward Whitchurch, who used Baldwin as a corrector (an editor of copy-texts) from 1547. Baldwin sometimes printed books in Whitchurch’s premises himself and was also a writer—author of *Beware the Cat* and other anti-papal satire—and one of the designers of the revels at Edward’s court in 1551–2, which were overseen by George Ferrers. Ferrers was described above as the owner of a book containing minor poems by Lydgate. He also read and ‘lyked well’ the poet’s longest work, *The Fall*. Baldwin describes Ferrers as one of the original seven authors of *The Mirror*: as ‘we opened suche bookes’ it was ‘maister Ferrers’, he writes, who ‘founde where Bochas left’ (31–2).⁸³ And Thomas Churchyard, who may have been another of the ‘dyuers learned men’ originally gathered around Lydgate’s book, also hints at an Edwardian coterie beginning for the Marian *Mirror*. He

⁸² London, Victoria and Albert Museum, Dyce Collection, no. 1175, A1v.

⁸³ See King, ‘Baldwin, William (*d.* in or before 1563)’, and Woudhuysen, ‘Ferrers, George (*c.* 1510–1579)’.

writes that he made ‘in King Edwards daies ... Shores wife’, a tragedy that was included in the edition of *The Mirror* of 1563.⁸⁴

In 1553, a new queen succeeded Edward. For all the ambiguity of her initial position on matters of religion, life was not simple for those of Mary’s subjects who had been directly involved in the Edwardian reform movement. Whitchurch was forced to give up his printing business and Wayland moved in, at about the time that ‘the quenes hignes’ took the throne from the usurper Lady Jane Grey. It is possible, as John J. Thompson has argued, that Wayland took over an incipient Edwardian project to produce a new edition of *The Fall* and a continuation penned by ‘sundry gentlemen very wel lerned’ as well. Baldwin must have been one of these gentlemen, willing, despite his hatred of popery, to recommend Lydgate’s work to the printer who would issue Mary’s primers from the same presses on which Whitchurch printed Edward’s. Wayland says that, despite all the advice he has received, he is missing ‘certayne copies’ which he would have used to make a better book of Lydgate’s text if he had them. His awareness of the existence of such copies may be further evidence that work on Lydgate’s text was already underway in 1553. In 1554, the printer Richard Tottel printed a carefully collated version of *The Fall*.⁸⁵ For it, he says he had recourse to ‘olde writen copies in parchment’ (A1r). Perhaps these are the ‘copies’ Wayland was missing. Tottel may have obtained these from Whitchurch or his helper Baldwin: he certainly obtained other printing materials from the Edwardian printer, including the title-page border that he used on the 1554 *Fall* (see above, Fig. 1).⁸⁶

If many things are possible amid the comings and goings of London bookmen and the rapid regime changes of this period, one thing is certain: Wayland, whether he conceived of the *Mirror* project or not, was the printer ‘hyndred by the lord Chauncellour’ in 1554—made to cancel *The Mirror* from his edition of *The Fall*. Scott Campbell Lucas has the

⁸⁴ He writes this in *STC* 5220, *Churchyards challenge*, *1v; the 1563 *Mirror* is *STC* 1248.

⁸⁵ *STC* 3177, *IMEV* 1168; the Greenacres envoy, *IMEV* 524; *The Daunce of Machabree*, *IMEV* 2590.

⁸⁶ See Thompson, ‘Reading Lydgate in Post-Reformation England’; I depend here on the evidence Professor Thompson carefully gathers; I am grateful for some very useful discussion. One point he makes, however, based on early research by H. J. Byrom (‘John Wayland’), should be corrected. The Powell family did not occupy Whitchurch’s premises in 1553 (see Blayney, ‘The Site of the Sign of the Sun’, 13–15). Tottel’s title-page compartment is in Ferguson and McKerrow, *Title-Page Borders Used in England & Scotland, 1485–1640*, no. 68.

most persuasive account of these events. Wayland, he argues, printed some copies of a joint edition, with the title-page described above on which both texts are announced, but when he showed these to Stephen Gardiner, anxious as he was about the queen's and the 'Counsayles pleasure', some subversive cracks in *The Mirror* showed themselves, and the chancellor ordered the text's suppression. The now erroneous title-page was removed from existing copies of *The Fall*, and a new one printed (see Fig. 33).⁸⁷ All that remained of *The Mirror* was a separate, internal title-page that Wayland had printed within the last gathering of *The Fall*, still extant in some copies (see Fig. 34); and a few cancelled leaves: one copy of the initial title-page (see Fig. 35), already described, and some text from the tale of Owen Glendower saved from a binding.⁸⁸

The reasons for the suppression of the 1554 edition of *The Mirror* remain slightly obscure. Paul Strohm maintains, cautiously, that 'Protestantism had *something* to do with the chancellor's intervention'; Lucas's case for the too-radical political potential of *The Mirror*'s 'subtle political commentary' is also persuasive.⁸⁹ It is equally hard to settle on a meaning for Lydgate's *Fall* as it passes through this period—at the centre of a meeting of some reform-minded poets, in the hands of one printer and perhaps the mind of another, giving pleasure to an otherwise displeased Marian censor, on the press, off it again, back on it, and finally in the shops where Mary's subjects purchased their books. We might perceive in Lydgate a kind of Edwardian hero. In a sense, the monk-author was rendered 'thoroughly Protestant' by the planned joint edition of the medieval *Fall of Princes* and the early modern *Mirror*. Even if the book was not planned by Whitchurch, it was certainly executed by his protestant colleague Baldwin with the help of some Edwardian courtiers who were, in a broad sense, supporters of reform—Ferrers and also Thomas Chaloner, another of the original seven authors, who was a diplomat and clerk for the Edwardian Privy Council and a trial witness against the bishops Bonner and Gardiner in 1549 and 1550.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Lucas implies that the new title page was tipped into existing books. In at least some copies I have examined (Huntington 99581, for instance—my thanks to Joseph Dane for confirming my findings) the title page is integral to the preliminaries (that is, attached to its conjugate). Further investigation may cast more light on Wayland's solution to the problem that confronted him.

⁸⁸ Lucas, 'The Suppressed Edition and the Creation of the "Orthodox" *Mirror for Magistrates*'.

⁸⁹ *Politique*, 113; 'The Suppressed Edition and the Creation of the "Orthodox" *Mirror for Magistrates*', 53.

⁹⁰ Miller, 'Chaloner, Sir Thomas, the elder (1521–1565)'.

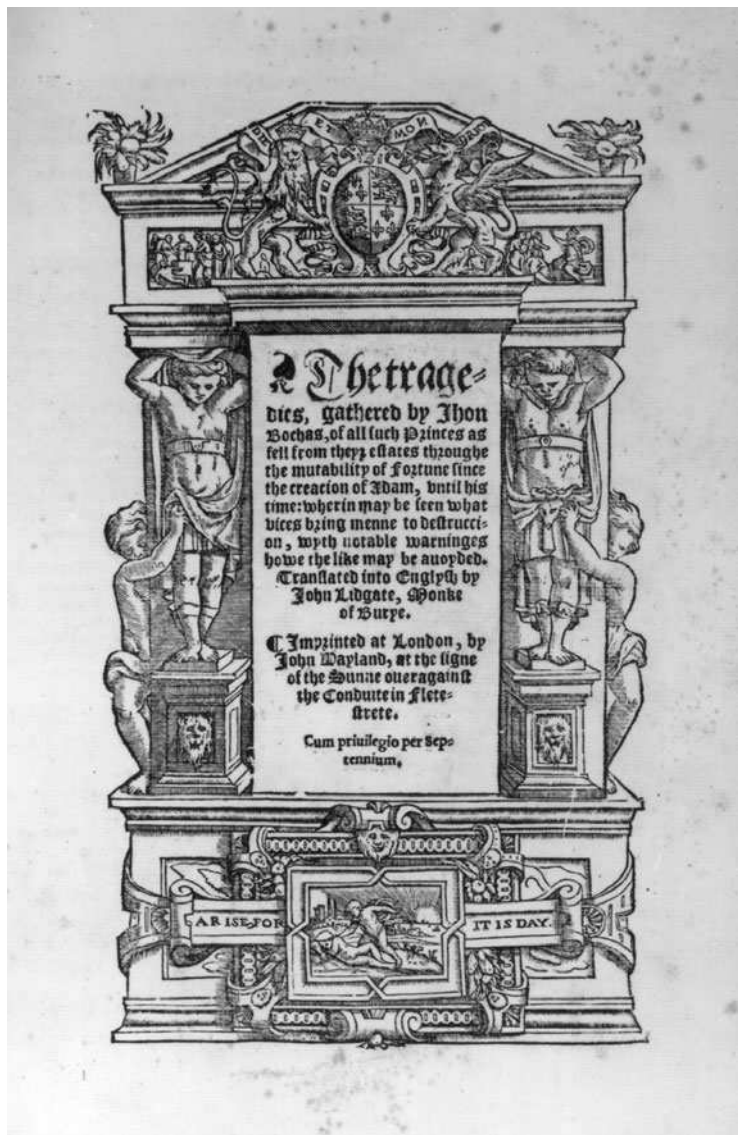


Figure 33. London, British Library, G. 11629: Lydgate's *Fall of Princes* (printed by John Wayland, 1554?), STC 3178, A1r. Reproduced with the permission of the British Library.

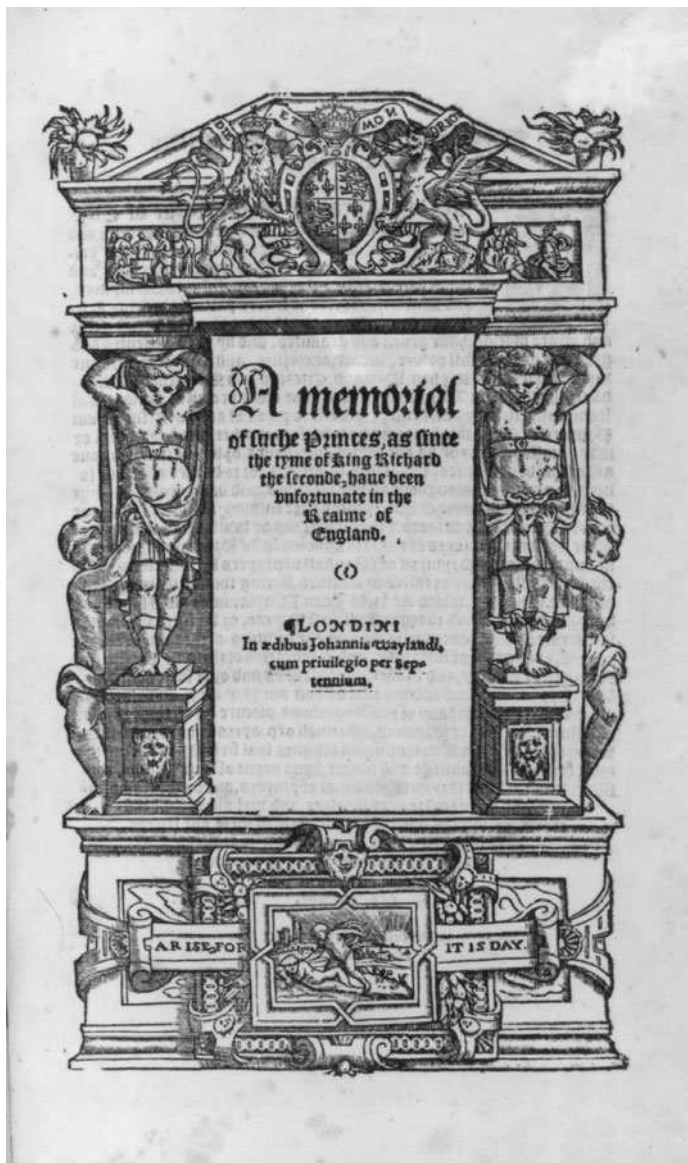


Figure 34. London, British Library, G. 11629: Lydgate's *Fall of Princes* (printed by John Wayland, 1554?), STC 3178, 2G4r, cancelled title page to *The Mirror for Magistrates*. Reproduced with the permission of the British Library.

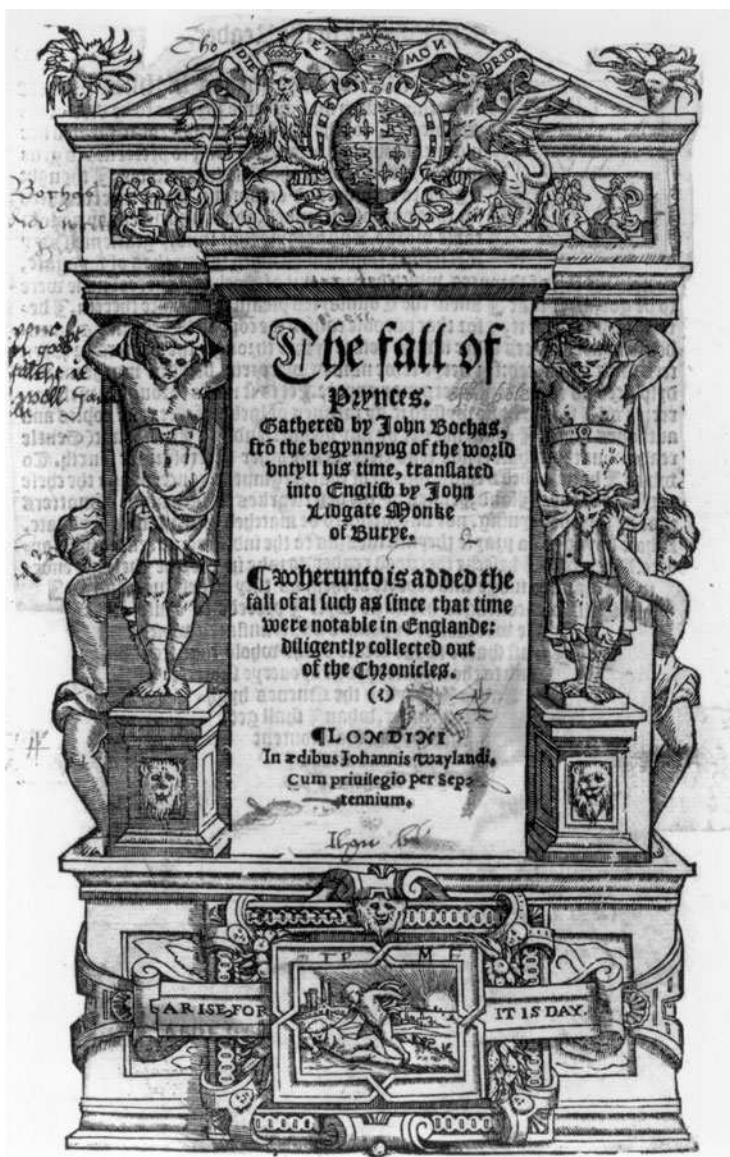


Figure 35. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, Dyce 1175: Lydgate's *Fall of Princes* (printed by John Wayland, 1554?), STC 3177.5, A1r. Reproduced with the permission of V&A Images, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

We should not be surprised that for all his hatred of popery Baldwin found room for himself and his writing in Marian England. The likes of Ferrers and Chaloner did much the same: the former fighting for Mary against Wyatt and his rebels and Chaloner serving her in France. This is what *The Fall* teaches. As Wayland's new title-page puts it, in its 'tragedies ... may be seen what vices bring menne to destruccion, wyth notable warninges howe the like may be auoyded'.⁹¹ The subversive medieval genre that caused Chaucer's Knight so much unease is, in Lydgate's text, especially as it is here presented by Wayland and by the authors of *The Mirror*, a lesson about how the powerful, or power-seeking, might *not* fall from fortune's favour. The past does not so much cycle back upon and defeat the present moment as press it, hopefully, forward—across regime and religious change—and carry the medieval author and his Tudor imitators with it.

There is additional evidence that the Marian printing of Lydgate—the sudden appearance of multiple editions of his texts after a hiatus during the reformation—involved the recognition and promotion of the author as a writer of up-to-the-minute texts. In 1555 Thomas Marshe printed a new edition of Pynson's *Troy Book*.⁹² The edition includes a preface by one of Lydgate's fans, an otherwise unidentified Robert Braham, who states that the poet 'may worthyly be numbred amongst those that haue chefelye deserved our tunge'. Braham goes on to attack Caxton's *Recuyell ... of Troye*

a longe tedious and brayneles bablyng, tendyng to no ende nor hauyng any certayne begynnynge: but proceadyng therin as an ydyot in his follye ... worthy to be numbred amongst the trifelinge tales and barrayne luerdries of Robyn Hode, & Beuys of Hampton.

Braham's past is not different from Bale's or Foxe's (it is just a little more brainless). It is 'barrayne', he says, dark and unlearned, illuminated only by the odd writer, like Lydgate, who must be retrieved, as was Chaucer, says Braham, by 'the dylygence of one willyam Thime [*sic*] a gentelman ... laudably studyouse to *the* polyshing of so great a Jewell ... perfected and stamped' (A2r). The veneer added to *The Troy Book* may be usefully compared not only with the 1532 *Workes* but with Richard Tottel's framework for his 1554 *Fall*. Set up in competition with the book soon to come off Wayland's presses, Tottel notes of his

⁹¹ The issue with the new title page is *STC* 3178.

⁹² *STC* 5580, *IMEV* 2516.

version not only that it is 'corrected, and augmented out of diuerse and sundry olde writen copies in parchment' but also that it was

first compyled in Latin by the excellent Clerke Bocatius, an Italian borne. And sence that tyme translated into our English and Uulgare tong, by Dan John Lidgate Monke of Burye. (A1r)

Boccaccio is no longer 'Bochas', as he is in Lydgate's text, but 'Bocatius', a more suitably Latinate name for a famous 'Italian borne' writer. The monk-poet has never looked so much like a humanist, afforded the same treatment that Boccaccio and his peers first bestowed upon classical authors. He is retrieved, not just from the medieval past, but from a past full of 'luerdries'. His text has been taken from the 'written copies' valued for their antique form 'in parchment'. He has been perfected, polished, and stamped, like the Roman armour in Tottel's title-page compartment.⁹³

However, Lydgate is also at his most medieval in the Marian printing of his works. His *Fall* and *Troy Book* were sold at this time in shops alongside just the sort of 'trifeling tales and barrayne luerdries' abhorred by Braham as evidence of the tedious history of English book production. Wayland's other publication in 1554 was Hawes's *Pastime of Pleasure*. Hawes's contribution to the amorous fiction so popular in the early years of Henry's reign had been out of print since 1517. The work was quickly reprinted during Mary's reign. It was issued, along with anonymous romances and other late medieval and early Tudor poems, including Lydgate's *Churl and the Bird*, by the press of William Copland, heir to the printer Robert Copland.⁹⁴ Copland printed one of his variant issues of Hawes's *Pastime* on behalf of Richard Tottel, whose most famous book of the Marian period is not his edition of *The Fall* but his 1557 *Songes and sonettes*, a volume that Seth Lerer has described as a 'Tudor book of the dead', replete with the epitaphs and poems of Wyatt and Surrey, the lyrical voices of a lost, golden age—Chaucer's 'Truth' among them, having perhaps been slipped into some manuscript copy

⁹³ See Wright, *Boccaccio in England from Chaucer to Tennyson* (who does not note Bocatius as one of the many variants of Boccaccio's name); on his influence as an editor of classical texts, see McLaughlin, 'Humanism and Italian Literature', 228–9.

⁹⁴ Wayland's Hawes is STC 12950; Copland's is STC 12951–2, variants printed for Waley and Tottel. On Copland, see Edwards, 'William Copland and the Identity of Printed Middle English Romance': his *Churl and Bird* is c.1565, STC 17014, IMEV 2784.

and then carried over, anonymously, into print.⁹⁵ Probably mindful of Wayland's intention to issue a continuation of *The Fall*, Tottel found another old text worth printing in this period, something else worth bringing to light, distinct from the 'brayneles bablyng' found in old books. To his 1554 *Fall* he appended:

The daunce of Machabree wherin is liuely expressed and shewed the state of manne, and howe he is called at vncertaine tymes by death, and when he thinketh least theron: made | by thaforesayde Dan John Lydgate Monke of Burye. (2[¢]1r)

The logic that unites *The Fall* and *The Daunce of Machabree* is authorial but also generic, and to some degree it transforms the author's text. By the addition of *The Daunce*, Lydgate's pragmatic advice on the subject of mutability, his solutions to the radical problems posed by 'vncertaine tymes', are made to seem less important than *fortuna*'s cyclical disclosure of man's post-lapsarian state. Tottel's title-page makes nothing of the 'warning' but much of the 'maner of Tragedye' within (A1r). His edition seems, in this way, to look more directly to its ultimate medieval source, 'Bocatus', just as it claims to—to the way that Boccaccio's original served 'to extend the somber tenets of his own late-life religious conservatism into the analysis of the real world'.⁹⁶

Religious conservatism is evident in the bibliographical and visual as well as literary features of Tottel's books. In Chapter 2 I described the only English edition of *The Daunce* that predates Tottel's, where it supplements an early printed book of hours. Up until 1549, however, Lydgate's text had been readily accessible to any visitor to the book-sellers near St Paul's Cathedral. At St Paul's itself it could be seen where it had been painted in 1430, as words and as images, at the behest of the Town Clerk, John Carpenter, on a wall in Pardon Churchyard attached to the chapel of the Blessed Virgin.⁹⁷ All this changed in 1549. At the command of Edward's Protector Somerset, the chapel walls were demolished, so that, as John Stow writes in his sixteenth-century *Survey of London*, 'the whole Cloystrie, the daunce of Death, the Tombes and Monuments ... nothing thereof was left but the bare plot of ground'.⁹⁸ William Dugdale says that Somerset thought the images were

⁹⁵ See the end of Ch. 3 and Lerer, *Courtly Letters in the Age of Henry VIII*, 168–92; *Songes and sonnettes* is STC 13860: among its contents is IMEV 809, 'Truth' (two further editions appeared in 1557, STC 13861–2).

⁹⁶ Strohm, *Politique*, 92.

⁹⁷ See Pearsall, *John Lydgate (1371–1449)*, 26–7.

⁹⁸ *A Survey of London*, i. 328; see Simpson, *Reform and Cultural Revolution*, ii. 53–62.

‘superstitiously worshippt by the people’ (though the demolition job also gave Somerset the materials he needed for the construction of Somerset House).⁹⁹ Tottel apparently thought some of these ‘people’ less changeable than those who governed them. He judged them willing, in 1554, to accede to their queen’s new doctrine—to buy new primers, perhaps take back up their old books of hours, or buy their copies of Lydgate’s *Fall of Princes* with *The Daunce* appended. Not only was Lydgate’s text restored in 1554 from parchment copies and fallen masonry, so were the very images to which, according to Dugdale, Somerset objected. On ¶¶1v of the edition is a woodcut illustration that gives perdurable form to an obliterated monument and to deeply rooted, medieval religious traditions. In the woodcut, the imagery of the St Paul’s fresco is restored. The king and the people follow the pope, back in his rightful place at the head of the estates, but still led, like all mortals, in a ‘daunce’ to death (see Fig. 36).¹⁰⁰

ENDINGS

The Edwardian–Marian Lydgate I have just described is a little like the reformers’ Chaucer. He is stuck at the juncture of seemingly antithetical interest in his text—he is a ‘rowne’ usurped and then usurped again, an end for literary meaning that turns out to be an opportunity for the revival of old textual traditions (the recovery of pre-reformation literary texts) and the beginning of new ones (projects such as *The Mirror*). He may be usefully described as part of a commercial book trade that relied on precisely this tendency of texts to stay open to change, to ‘flygh forth faste for the nones’ (*House of Fame*, ll. 2086–7). Wayland, Tottel, and Whitchurch were not only religious conservatives or evangelical reformers but also businessmen, holders of patents and producers of new books that they believed they could sell—because, like *The Fall of Princes*, they had not been printed for a time, or because, like *The Daunce*, they made a book look better than one issued by a competitor.

It is no longer fashionable to claim, as historians once did, that the Marian regime and its supporters failed to understand the importance of printing. Her accession witnessed a revival of interest in the printed

⁹⁹ Dugdale, *The History of St. Pauls Cathedral in London*, 45.

¹⁰⁰ On visual traditions of the cult of death in the late Middle Ages, see Friedman, ‘“He Hath a Thousand Slayn This Pestilence”’.

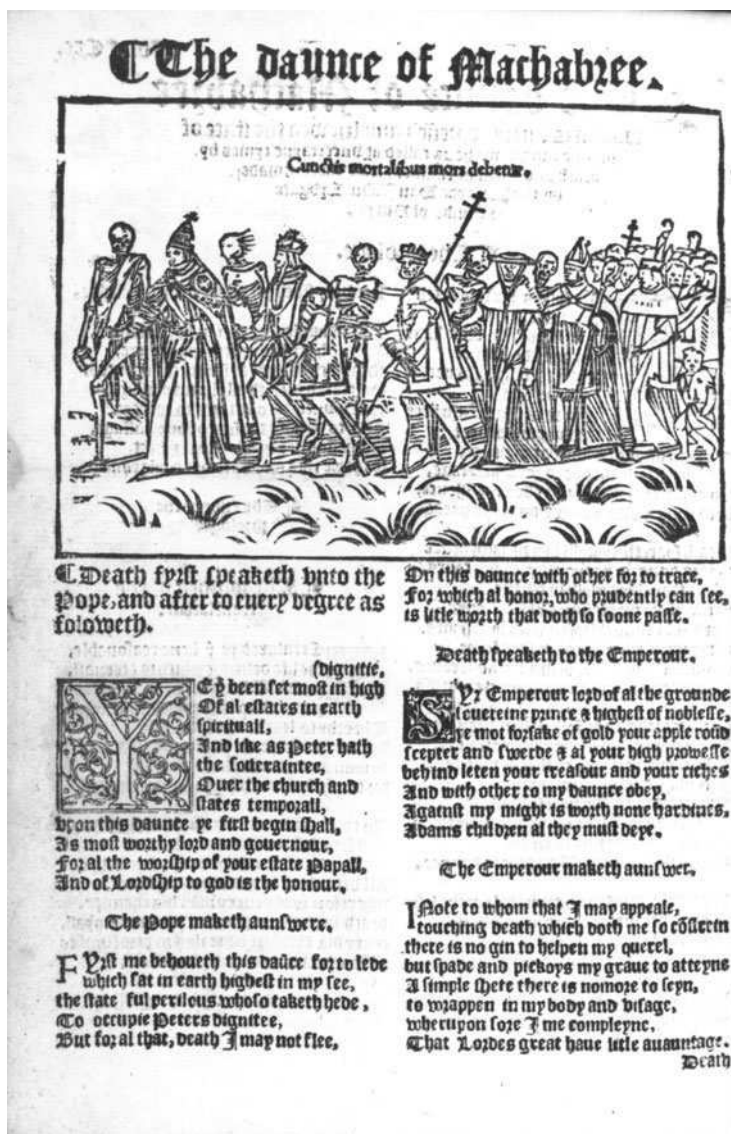


Figure 36. London, British Library, 79 h. 4: Lygdate's *Fall of Princes* (published by Richard Tottel, 1554), STC 3177, 2[¢]1v, from *Daunce of Machabree*. Reproduced with the permission of the British Library.

books of the early years of Henry VIII and new uses for the English press (the printing of polemic for potential continental allies, for instance).¹⁰¹ It also brought to fruition the slow process of trade organization that had begun in the fourteenth century with the rise of a commercial trade in manuscripts and been made more urgent by the advent of print. In 1557 Mary signed the London Stationers' Charter and the Stationers' Register was founded. A growing London monopoly over the production and sale of printed books was formalized and buttressed.¹⁰² Making books was very evidentially about making money during Mary's reign, and Lydgate's texts, carefully marketed as his, were among those that addressed printers' commercial concerns.

The last word on this matter in this study is found in Wayland's 1554 *Fall*. In that year or perhaps some time after, at the same time that he printed copies of a new title-page to replace the one that mentioned the cancelled *Mirror*, Wayland also printed a new poem to replace *The Mirror* itself, *The bayte & snare of fortune* by Roger Bieston (perhaps the man of that name who was a merchant taylor of London).¹⁰³ Wayland's design for *Bayte & snare* promotes it as a companion piece to *The Fall*. He used the same title-page border. He was perhaps responsible for the title's wording, which echoes the theme of 'fortune' from Lydgate's *Fall* (see Fig. 37).¹⁰⁴ In fact, Bieston's text has only limited traffic with ideas about *fortuna*. His is a text of another sort, a conventional dialogue between Money and Man which comes to an unconventional conclusion.¹⁰⁵ Money is, to be sure, 'the cause of many a wickednes'. But it is also the method by which 'to preferment many a man is brought' (B4v). Wayland has already made the point on the title-page:

¹⁰¹ Loach, 'The Marian Establishment and the Printing Press'.

¹⁰² See Blayney, *The Stationers' Company before the Charter, 1403–1557*, 35–53.

¹⁰³ *STC* 3055–5.5, 1556? *STC* notes in its entry that 'the book is sometimes bound with *STC* 3178'. The copies I have seen where the items are together are: Bodl. B. 1. 7 Art. Seld.; Houghton, f*STC* 3178 (A and B); and CUL Sel. 3. 211; Lucas notes a Folger Library copy bound and then rebound to accommodate both pieces ('The Suppressed Edition and the Creation of the "Orthodox" Mirror for Magistrates', n. 34). Bodl. Douce B. 223, a copy of *The bayte & snare*, was formerly bound with an unidentified copy of *The Fall*: a note in a secretary hand on B4v states that 'caterine ffox doo learne the histori of John Bocas'. The elaborate will of a 'Roger Beeston', PCC Prob. 11/95, was proved 2 April 1600, perhaps the author or a descendant.

¹⁰⁴ Ferguson and McKerrow, *Title-Page Borders Used in England & Scotland, 1485–1640*, no. 76.

¹⁰⁵ On this and other contemporary texts about money, see Manley, *Literature and Culture in Early Modern London*, 77–98.



Figure 37. Oxford, University of Oxford, Bodleian Library, B. 1. 7 Art. Seld.: Bieston's *Bayte & snare of fortune* (printed by John Wayland, 1556?), *STC* 3055, A1r. Reproduced with the permission of The Bodleian Library, University of Oxford.

Wherin may be seen that money is not the only cause of mischefe and vnfortunat endes: but a necessary mean to mayntayne a vertuous quiet lyfe. (A1r)

Traditional anxiety about the disruption of the estates by the mercantile classes—‘for who that hath [money] is honoured as a lorde’ (A2v)—is undermined by Money’s rhetorically forceful argument *for* mercantile growth and change, for the solid structures and ‘quiet’ strength of accumulated wealth:

Who buylded London that named was newe Troye
But I puyfant peny, that eche man cloth and fede
Euer groweth grace out of my gromel sede.

(A3r)

The enduring (Chaucerian as well as Pauline¹⁰⁶) maxim with which Bieston begins his text, ‘radix malorum est cupiditas’, can thus be replaced at the last by pithy sayings:

Get thy goods truly, Spende them precisely:
Set thy goods duly, Lende thou them wisely.
True gettyng, Cyse spendyng,
Due settyng, Wyse lendyng,
Haue he lyttle or much, Kepeth a man full rutche
Untyll his ending.

(B4v)

This might seem a surprising way to end a book that contains so much moralizing by Lydgate. *The Fall* may be avante-garde in its topic and pragmatic in its approach to that topic, but even in a text where he complains that princes do not do enough by way of ‘dispençe’ for poets and argues, like Bieston, that money alone creates ‘quiet fro worldli mocioun’, Lydgate *first* proposes traditional ends for textual production.¹⁰⁷ The true reward for making a book is to do a patron’s ‘plesaunce’ and to do lasting good, ‘[t]o shewe the chaung off worldli variaunce’ (Prologue, 434–5). The hope of princely ‘dispençe’ is reason to name oneself as Lydgate does in *The Fall*, if only by a coded allusion to his home town. Conversely, a culture that privileges the non-pecuniary, moral ends of

¹⁰⁶ St Paul in 1 Timothy 6: 10 is also the starting point for the Pardoner’s tale of avarice in *The Canterbury Tales*.

¹⁰⁷ From the chapter on the governance of poets, *Fall of Princes*, III. 3839, 3843. On the omission of this passage from all printed editions (following Pynson’s manuscript copy-text) except Tottel’s, see notes to the edition, iv. 5–7.

literary work—a culture in which those ends merge with the broad risks of publication (fear of censure for worldly ambition or some more serious transgression) and the deleterious effects of transmission—is a culture that gives the writer reason to believe that all acts of literary self-authorization are just a kind of wishful thinking, best couched in humble or ambiguous terms. The printers who made English literary texts into ‘goods’ on an unprecedented scale after 1473 and the writers, like Bieston, who worked for them had reason to be more sanguine. For all its traditional, playful form, an acrostic that bears Bieston’s name at the end of his *Bayte & snare* discloses his authorship unambiguously. He is ‘The Author’ in the rubric that heads up this poem. It ends with the words ‘nomen auctoris’ (B4v), just in case the reader missed the point. An ascription of this sort—the name of a writer—was ‘due setting’ of a printed book: an ordering principle for a mass of products; an inducement to the customers of a newly speculative trade; a possible hindrance to censors or the censorious. Printers found in the medieval author a way to do something that Lydgate hopes for, and yet fears is elusive, and that Bieston simply proposes as ‘wyse’. The author proposes a good ‘ending’ for a text. In doing so he provides a wealth of reasons for someone to buy it, and begin to read it, and open it to worldly change once more.

Afterword

At Lydgate's Tomb

In the middle of the 1550s, during the reign of Mary and in the midst of a revival of interest on the part of printers in Lydgate's texts, Chaucer's tomb was erected in Westminster Abbey at the charge and expense of the Tudor antiquary Nicholas Brigham.¹ It was at about this time that a written tradition relating to the Westminster monument was established, as book collectors, chorographers, editors, readers, and antiquaries became increasingly interested in making records of textual and architectural monuments to England's literary past.² Chaucer's tomb is still there, in Poets' Corner, but the modern visitor to Westminster will not find a tomb to any other medieval author. Lydgate is not resting next to his master. This was not, perhaps, for lack of mid sixteenth-century trying. In his notebooks, John Bale transcribes a tribute to the monk-poet that he ascribes to Brigham (or at least places among Brigham's books). It reads:

Epitaphium Lydgate.
Mortuus seculo, superis superstes,
Hic iacet Lydgate, tumulatus urna,
Qui fuit quondam celebris Britanne,
Fama poesis.

[Dead to the world, living above, Lydgate lies here entombed in an urn, he who was in former times famed, throughout Britain, for poetry.]³

The epitaph to the poet once celebrated 'throughout Britain' may never have been set in stone, but it was, at least, written. And over time, speculation grew (admittedly not very quickly) about the whereabouts of

¹ See Alsop, 'Nicholas Brigham (*d.* 1558)'.

² See the discussion in Dane, *Who is Buried in Chaucer's Tomb?*, ch. 1; Dane and Gillespie, 'Back at Chaucer's Tomb'; Prendergast, *Chaucer's Dead Body*, ch. 4.

³ *Index Britanniae Scriptorum*, 'ex collectis Nicolai Brigam', 231. Brigham's books provided Bale with most of his list of Lydgate's works.

Lydgate's remains. Bale, for instance, describes a Bury burial for Lydgate ('Buriae tandem sepultus') in his *Summarium*.⁴ This may have been an educated guess, but it was a guess substantiated by a later antiquary, Edward King, who in 1777 published an account of the discovery, in the grounds of a house built over the ruins of the monastery at Bury St Edmunds, of stone fragments bearing Lydgate's name. He reproduced the rubbing he made of the inscription on the stones—the beginning of the name 'lidgate' is visible (see Fig. 38)—but noted that he was unable to match the fragmentary text with the verse inscription for Lydgate in Weever's *Antient Funerall Monuments*—a version of that recorded by Bale.⁵

There is independent evidence of an early memorial to Lydgate. On the flyleaf (fol. 170v) of BL Harley 116 in a mid-fifteenth-century scribal hand, is a copy of an epitaph for the poet. Marked marginally as 'Epitafium. Iohannis Lidgate monachi de Byri', it reads:

Lidgate cristolicon, Edmundum, maro Britanis Boccasiousque viros psallit et hic cinis est. Haec tria praecipua opera fecit vij libros de *Christo* librum de vita *Sancti* Edmundi, et Boccasium de viris illustribus; cum multis aliis.

[Lydgate, the British Virgil and Boccaccio, sang of the history of Christ, of St Edmund, and of men, and his remains are here. He composed three main works: seven books about Christ; the book of the life of Saint Edmund; and *de viris illustribus* by Boccaccio, with many others.]⁶

A version of the Latin text just cited—with its humanist vocabulary and comparison of Lydgate with Virgil and Boccaccio—appears in the most recent work published on the tomb, that in Derek Pearsall's 1997 bio-bibliography for Lydgate. Pearsall does not, however, mention the Harley manuscript version. He says that he takes his text from King and remarks of it:

King also quotes yet another Latin epitaph, supposedly the original inscription of Lydgate's tomb, citing Weever and Willis as his source. ... Of the three references to poems, it will be seen, one mistakes the *Life of Our Lady* for a life of Christ. The epitaphs are the product, it would seem, of an impulse to manufacture funerary inscriptions for famous long-dead writers.

⁴ 1548, *STC* 1295, 3E3r.

⁵ King, 'An Account of the Great Seal of Ranulph Earl of Chester'; Weever, *Antient Funerall Monuments*, 1631, *STC* 25223, 730.

⁶ My thanks to Daniel Wakelin for retranscribing this epitaph for me and for suggesting the likely meaning of 'Cristolicon'.



Figure 38. Oxford, University of Oxford, Bodleian Library, R. Top. 7: King, 'An Account of the Great Seal of Ranulph Earl of Chester' (published in *Archaeologia*, 4 (1777), 119–31), insertion facing page 130. Reproduced with the permission of The Bodleian Library, University of Oxford.

In fact, neither Weever nor King nor Willis prints the inscription from Lydgate's tomb that Pearsall and the Harley scribe produce.⁷ No extant version of a tomb inscription for Lydgate matches the rubbing by King. I have not yet traced Pearsall's source for the Latin epitaph (if it is not Harley 116 itself) and it is unlikely we will ever know whether Lydgate was actually interred at Bury St Edmunds.⁸ We cannot be sure which words, if any, were used to mark the place where he was laid to rest. We do not even know to what, exactly, the 'vij libros de Christo' or 'crisolicon' in the epitaph refer.⁹ And no one, after Brigham's abortive attempt, has bothered to make a material memorial for Lydgate since the fifteenth century. Right up to the present day, Chaucer's tomb has been deemed enough of the literary, English Middle Ages to have carved in stone.

My work on the history of Lydgate's tomb is incomplete, but I end with this brief account of it because it bears some resemblance to the story of the medieval author and early English print culture presented by this study. We can go looking for an edifice to the past, a 'principle of thrift' amid the proliferating meanings and ragged forms of hundreds of old texts and printed books. We will, in places, find one. Chaucer and his canon were reconstructed in sixteenth-century editions, and Lydgate was also, at times, 'numbred amongst those that haue chefullye deserued our tunge', as Robert Braham writes in the 1555 *Troy Book*. Both authors could be and were made to stand out from all the other vernacular works that might be and were printed. They lent a kind of dignity, all the value of the past, to books produced at moments when for various reasons—in the context of a large number of new printed books and amid political, religious, and intellectual change—it was especially important to define the value of texts.

But Chaucer and Lydgate made their names available to posterity out of dread as well as in hope of such lively and long-lived making and remaking of their literary work. Lydgate was perhaps especially right to do so. Posterity would not favour him as often as it did his master with

⁷ Pearsall, *John Lydgate (1371–1449)*, 41.

⁸ I have used King's article in copies of *Archaeologia* with the date 1777 (for 1776) at the Huntington and Bodleian and Robarts Library, University of Toronto. Pearsall notes that *his* 1776 issue has the wrong date: 1786. It is possible that Professor Pearsall saw a reissue of the journal with new notes by King.

⁹ Pearsall speculates that Lydgate's *Life of Our Lady* is meant (*John Lydgate (1371–1449)*, 41); however, that text is six not seven books. I am inclined to think that a lost text is described.

ennobling poems or stone monuments. There is still no collected edition (or even comprehensive, up-to-date list) of Lydgate's works in print. Like versions of his epitaph, a great many of his poems are scattered in old manuscripts and antiquated editions.¹⁰ However, it has been a contention of this study that both Chaucer and Lydgate understood authorship in terms of persistently unstable textual traditions, and that their complex response to this understanding served as a basis for the 'critical terminology' that was, increasingly, applied to their works in print. It is appropriate that the last text by Chaucer or Lydgate printed in the period of concern in this study was Tottel's version of 'Truth', incorporated into the 1557 *Songes and sonettes* under the heading 'vncertain auctours'.¹¹ A medieval author is one way to define a text among many, a history for a book that does not eliminate uncertainty, but instead describes the multiple forms in which we encounter texts and the meanings that they continue to make long after their author is himself 'vncertain' — a name on a title page, a drawing in a margin, a memory, and so, as Chaucer would have it, 'noon auctor' at all.

¹⁰ Edwards, 'Lydgate Manuscripts'.

¹¹ *STC* 13861, N2r.

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